

AIINSILEE'S TWO AGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

TRUXTON

KING by GEORGE

BARR M°CUTCHEON

Contributors October

HOWARD CHANDLER

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serial story, "Truxton King," not only leads all the other current serials, but seems to be so far in advance that there is no second. This new **Graustark** tale promises to outdo its two predecessors which, together, sold over a million copies. The fourth in stallment will appear in November.

HARRISON FISHER'S

colored illustrations of "Truxton King" will be continued. They represent the artist's best work and have added an extremely popular feature to the story and the magazine.

WOLCOTT BEARD will contribute the complete novel, a tale of tense dramatic interest. "The Daughter of Spectres" is a tale with a Western atmosphere, combined with that of New York.

JOSEPH C. LINCOLN will contribute one of his characteristically humorous tales, entitled "The Deep Sea and the Dog,"

CAMPBELL MAC CULLOCH will have in "The Trouble Man" a story whose dénouement is as strong as it is unexpected.

MRS. WILSON WOODROW will contribute a story called "Flower o' Night," which is very far from the stereotyped class of which there are so many.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL will have a story which he calls "His Relics," in which he develops a most extraordinary situation between a man and a woman.

CAROLINE DUER is the author of a tale, in the November number, called "A Jest's Prosperity," wholly fresh and original **

JULIANA CONOVER'S "Dr. Denny's Decision," tells of a man's solution of a very difficult problem.

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG will continue his fascinating talks on music and musicians, and his article "In Musicland" will be particularly interesting.

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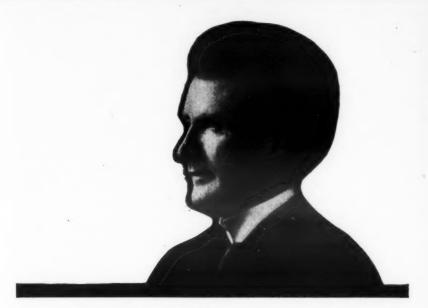
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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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"THE PRINCE, IN PAJAMAS, WAS DISCOURSING BRAVELY ON THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF FATE."

Illustrated by Harrison Fisher. Ainslee Insert, Oct., 1909. Truxton King."
A Story of Granstark.
By George Barr McCutcheon.
See page 20.

TRUXTON KING a story of GRAUSTARK George Barr McCutcheon

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

A young American, Truxton King, a member of a prominent New York family, has come abroad in search of romance and adventure; and finally finds himself in Edelweiss, the capital of Graustark. The hereditary ruler of the little kingdom is Prince Robin, a lad of seven, who is under the guardianship of John Tullis, a life-long friend of the little prince's dead American father. King, finding at first but little romance in the place, strolls into the shop of William Spantz, the court armorer, and there encounters the latter's beautiful niece, Olga Platanova. The girl begs him not to come there any more, hinting at some mysterious danger to both herself and him. The minister of police, Baron Dangloss, sends for King, and after evincing an extraordinary knowledge of the young man's previous history, tells him that Olga is an anarchist and warns him to have nothing further to do with her. King engages a guide named Hobbs to take him to the palace grounds. He there breaks bounds and in the private gardens meets the little prince and a lovely young woman whom the prince addresses as "Aunt Loraine" and to whom the American is strongly attracted. There is a plot, headed by the Iron Count, Marlanx, to seize the government and put to death the prince. Olga Platanova is selected by lot for this last task. The beautiful Countess Marlanx suspects her husband of conspiring, and so informs John Tullis, who is in love with her.

CHAPTER VII.



HE next morning, before setting forth to consult the minister of police at the tower, Tullis called up the Perse palace on the telephone and asked for the countess, to

tell her in so many words that he had been followed from her door to the very gates of the castle grounds. Not by one man alone, for that would have excited suspicion, but by half a dozen at least, each one taking up the surveillance in the most casual manner as the watcher before him left off. Tullis was amazed by the cunning which masked these proceedings; there was a wily brain behind it.

The duke's secretary answered the call. Tullis was completely bowled over by the curt information that the Countess Marlanx had left Edelweiss

before six that morning, to join her husband, who was shooting wild boars with a party in Axphain,

"When does she return?" demanded the American, scarcely believing his ears. She had said nothing of this the night before. What could it mean?

"I do not know, sir."
"In a day or two?"

"She took sixteen trunks, sir," was the laconic reply, as if that told the story in full,

"Well, I'm damned!"
"I beg pardon, sir!"

"I beg your pardon. Good morning."

In the meantime, our excellent young friend, Truxton King, was having a sorry time of it. It all began when he went to the cathedral in the hope of seeing the charming aunt of the little prince once more. Not only did he attend one service, but all of them, having been assured that the royal fam-

Departient, 1909, by George Barr McCu cheen

ily worshiped there quite as regularly and as religiously as the lowliest communicant. She did not appear.

More than all this, he met with fresh disappointment when he ambled down to the armorer's shop. The doors were locked and there was no sign of life about the shuttered place. The cafés were closed on this day of rest, so there was nothing left for him to do but to slink off to his room in the Regengetz, there to read or to play solitaire, and to curse the progress of civilization.

Monday was little better than Sunday. Hobbs positively refused to escort him to the castle grounds again. No amount of bribing or browbeating could move the confounded Englishman from his stand. He was willing to take him anywhere else, but never again would he risk a personally conducted tour into hot waters royal. Mr. King resigned himself to a purely business call at the shop of Mr. Spantz. He looked long, with a somewhat shifty eye, at the cabinet of ancient rings and necklaces, and then departed without having seen the interesting Miss Platanova. If the old man observed a tendency to roam in the young man's eye he did not betray the fact —at least not so that any one could notice. Truxton departed, but re-turned immediately after luncheon, vaguely inclined to decide between two desirable rings. After a protracted period of indecision, in which Olga remained stubbornly out of sight, he announced that he could not make up his mind, and would return later.

At his room in the hotel, he found a note addressed to himself. It did not have much to say, but it meant a great deal. There was no signature, and the handwriting was that of a woman.

Please do not come again.

That was all.

He laughed with a fine tone of defiance and—went back to the shop at five o'clock, just to prove that nothing so timid as a note could stop him. This, however, was after he had taken a long walk down Castle Avenue, with a supplementary stroll of little incident outside the grim, high walls that inclosed the grounds. If any one had told him that he was secretly hoping to find a crevasse through which he could invade paradise, I make no doubt he would have resented the imputation soundly. On the occasion of this last visit to the shop, he did not stay long, but went away somewhat dazed to find himself the possessor of a ring he did not want and out of pocket just thirty dollars, American. Having come to the conclusion that knight-errantry of that kind was not only profligate but distinctly irritating to his sense of humor, he looked up Mr. Hobbs and arranged for a day's ride in the moun-

"You'll oblige me, Mr. Hobbs, by removing that band from your cap. I know you're an interpreter. It's an insult to my intelligence to have it flaunted in my face all day long. I'll admit you're what you say you are, so take it off before we start out to-mor-

row."

And so, minus the beguiling insignia of office, Mr. Hobbs led his hypercritical patron into the mountain roads early the next morning, both well mounted and provided with a luncheon large enough to restore the amiability that was sure to flag at midday unless sustained by unæsthetic sandwiches and beer.

The day was bright and clear, warm in the valley where the city lay, cooler to cold as one mounted the winding roads that led past the lofty Monastery of St. Valentine, sombre sentinel

among the clouds.

A part of Edelweiss is built along the side of the mountain, its narrow streets winding upward and past countless terraces to the very base of the rocky, jagged eminence at whose top, a full mile above the last sprinkling of houses, stands the isolated, bleak monastery. The view from these upper streets, before one enters the circuitous and hidden monastery road that winds afar in its climb, is never to be forgotten by the spectator, no mat-

ter how often he traverses the lofty thoroughfares. As far as the eye can reach lies the green valley, through which winds the silvery river with its evergreen banks and spotless white houses-greens and whites that almost shame the vaunted tints of old Ireland as one views them from the incoming steamers. Immediately below one's feet lies the compact little city, with its red roofs and green chimney pots, its narrow streets and vivid awnings, its wide avenues and the ancient castle to the north. To the south, the fortress and the bridges; encircling the city a thick, high wall, with here and there enormous gates flanked by towers so grim and old that they seem ready to topple over from the sheer fatigue of centuries. A soft Indian summer haze hangs over the lazy-lit valley; it is always so in the summer

Outside the city walls stretch the wheat fields and the meadows, the vine-yards and orchards, all snug in the nest of forest-crowned hills, whose lower slopes are spotted with broken herds of cattle and the more mobile flocks of sheep. An air of tranquillity lies low over the entire vista; one dozes if he looks long into this peaceful bowl of plenty.

From the distant passes in the mountains in the east and north come the dull intonations of dynamite blasts, proving the presence of that disturbing element of progress which is driving the railroad through the unbroken heart of the land.

It is a good three hours' ride to the summit of Monastery Mountain. And after the height has been attained one does not care to linger long among the chilly, whistling crags, with their snow crevasses and bitter winds; the utter loneliness, the aloofness of this frost-crowned crest appalls, disheartens one who loves the fair green things of life. In the shelter of the crags, at the base of the monastery walls, looking out over the sunlit valley, one has his luncheon and his snack of spirits quite undisturbed, for the monks pay no heed to him. They are not hospitable,

neither are they unfriendly. One seldom sees them.

Truxton King and Mr. Hobbs were not long in disposing of their lunch. It was too cold for comfort in their draughty dining room, and they were not invited to enter the inhospitable gates. In half an hour they were wending their way down the north side of the peak by gradually declining roads, headed for the much-talked-of home of the witch in Ganlook Gap, some six miles from Edelweiss as the crow flies, but twice that distance over the tortuous bridle paths and post roads.

It was three o'clock when they clattered down the stone road and up to the forbidding vale in which lurked, like an evil, guilty thing, the log-built home of that ancient female who made no secret of her practices in witchcraft. The hut stood back from the mountain road a hundred yards or more, at the head of a small, thicket-grown recess.

A low, thatched roof protruded from the hill against which the hut was built. As a matter of fact, a thin chimney grew out of the earth itself, for all the world like a smoking tree stump. The hovel was a squalid, beggarly thing that might have been built overnight somewhere back in the dark ages. Its single door was so low that one was obliged to stoop to enter the little room where the dame had been holding forth for three-score years, 'twas said. This was her throne room, her dining room, her bedchamber, her all, it would seem, unless one had been there before and knew that her kitchen was beyond, in the side of the hill. The one window, sans glass, looked narrowly out upon an odd opening in the foliage below, giving the occupant of the hut an unobstructed view of the winding road that led up from Edelweiss. The door faced the monastery road down which the two men had just ridden. As for the dooryard, it was no more than a pebbly, avalanche-swept opening among the trees and rocks, down which in the glacial age perhaps a thousand torrents had leaped, but which was now so dry and lifeless that one could think only of bones bleached and polished by a sun that had sickened of the work a

thousand years ago.

This brief, inadequate description of the witch's hut is given in advance of the actual descent of the personallyconducted gentleman, for the somewhat ambiguous reason that he was to find it not at all as described.

The two horsemen rode into the glen and came plump upon a small detachment of the royal guard, mounted and rather resolute in their lack of amiabil-

"Wot's this?" gasped Mr. Hobbs, drawing rein at the edge of the pebbly

doorvard.

"Soldiers, I'd say," remarked Mr. King, scowling quite glumly from beneath the rim of his panama. "Hello!" His eyes brightened and his hat came

off with a swish. "There's the prince!"
"My word!" ejaculated Mr. Hobbs, and forthwith began to ransack his pockets for the band which said he was

from Cook's.

Farther up the glen-in fact, at the very door of the witch's hut-were gathered a small but rather distinguished portion of the royal household. It was not difficult to recognize the little prince. He was standing beside John Tullis; and it is not with a desire to speak ill of his valor that we add, he was clutching the slackest part of that gentleman's riding breeks with an earnestness that betrayed extreme trepidation. Facing them, on the stone doorstep, was the witch herself, a figure to try the courage of a time-tried hero, let alone the susceptibilities of a small boy in knickers. Behind Tullis and the prince were several ladies and gentlemen, all in riding garments and all more or less ill at ease.

Truxton King's heart swelled suddenly; all the world grew bright again for him. Next to the tall figure of Colonel Quinnox, of the Royal Guard, was the slim, entrancing lady of his most recent dreams—the prince's aunt! The lady of the grotto! The lady of

the goldfish conspiracy!

The Countess Marlanx, tall and exquisite, was a little apart from the others, with Baron Dangloss and young Count Vos Engo-whom Truxton was ready to hate because he was a recognized suitor for the hand of the slim young person in gray. He thought he had liked her beyond increase in the rajah silk, but now he confessed to himself that he was mistaken. He liked her better in a gray riding habit. It struck him sharply, as he sat there in the saddle, that she would be absolutely and adorably faultless in point lace or calico, in silk or gingham, low neck or high. He was for riding boldly up to this little group, but a very objectionable lieutenant barred the way, supported in no small measure by the defection of Mr. Hobbs, who announced in a hoarse, agitated whisper that he'd "be 'anged if he'd let any man make a fool of him twice

The way was made easy by the intervention of the alert young woman in gray. She caught sight of the restricted adventurers-or one of them, to be quite accurate-and, after speeding a swift smile of astonishment, turned

quickly to Prince Bobby.

A moment later the tall stranger with the sun-browned face was the centre of interest to the small group at the door. He bowed amiably to the smiling young person in gray and received a quick nod in response. As he was adventuring what he considered to be a proper salute for the prince, he observed that a few words passed between the lad's aunt and John Tullis, who was now surveying him with some inter-

The prince broke the ice.

"Hello!" he cried shrilly, his little face aglow.

"Hello!" responded the gentleman

readily.

John Tullis found himself being dragged away from the witch's door toward the newcomer at the bottom of the glen. Mr. Hobbs listened with deepening awe to the friendly conversation, which resulted in Truxton King going forward to join the party in front of the hut. He came along in the rear, after having tethered the tired horses, not quite sure that he was

awake. The prince had called him Mr. Cook, had asked him how his sons were, all of which was highly gratifying when one pauses to consider that he had got his cap band on upside down in his excitement. He always was to wonder how the little monarch succeeded in reading the title without standing on his head to do so.

Truxton was duly presented to the ladies and gentlemen of the party by John Tullis, who gracefully announced that he knew King's parents in New York. Baron Dangloss was quite an old friend, if one were to judge by the manner in which he greeted the young man. The lady in gray smiled so sweetly and nodded so blithely that Tullis, instead of presenting King to her as he had done to the Countess Marlanx and others, merely said:

"And you know one another, of

Whereupon she flushed very prettily and felt constrained to avoid Truxton's look of inquiry. He did not lose his wits, but bowed acquiescence politely and assumed that he knew.

As a result of the combined supplications of the entire party, the old woman grudgingly consented to take them into her hovel, where, in lieu of small pieces of silver, she would undertake certain manifestations in necro-

Truxton King, scarcely able to believe his good fortune, crowded into the loathsome, squalid room with his aristocratic companions, managing, with considerable skill, to keep close beside his charming friend. They stood back while the others crowded up to the table where the hag occupied herself with the greated hall.

self with the crystal ball.

Never had Truxton looked upon a creature who so thoroughly vindicated the lifelong reliance he had put in the description of witches given by the fairy-tale tellers of his earliest youth. She had the traditional hook nose and peaked chin, the glittering eyes, the thousand wrinkles, and the toothless gums. He looked about for the raven and the cat, but, if she had them, they were not in evidence. At a rough

guess, he calculated her age at one hundred years. A youth of extreme laziness, who Baron Dangloss said was the old woman's grandson, appeared to be her man of all work. He fetched the old woman's crystal, placed stools for the visitors, lighted the candles on the table, occupying no less than a quarter of an hour in performing these simple acts, so awkward that at least two of his observers giggled openly and whispered their opinions.

"Gruesome lady, isn't she?" whispered King.

"I shall dream of her for months," whispered the lady in gray, shuddering.
"Are you willing to have her read your future in that ball?"

"Do you really think she can tell?"

"I once had a fortune teller say that I would be married before I was twenty-three," he informed her. She ap-

peared interested.
"And were you?"

"No. But she did her part, you know —the fortune teller, I mean."

"She warned you. I see. So it really wasn't her fault," She was watching the preparations at the table with eager eyes, her lips parted and her breath coming quick through excitement.

"Would you mind telling me how I am to address you?" whispered King. They were leaning against the mudplastered wall near the little window, side by side. The whimsical smile that every one loved to see was on his lips, in his eyes. "You see, I'm a stranger in a stranger land. That accounts for my ignorance."

"You must not speak while she is gazing into the crystal," she warned, after a quick, searching glance at his face. He could have sworn that he saw a gleam of concern in her eyes, followed instantly by a twinkle that meant mischief.

"Please consider my plight," he implored. "I can't call you Aunt Loraine, you know."

She laughed silently and turned her head to devote her entire attention to the scene at the table. Truxton King

was in a sudden state of trepidation. Had he offended her? There was a hot rush of blood to his ears. He missed the sly, wondering glance that she gave him out of the corner of her

eye a moment later.

Although it was broad daylight, the low, stuffy room would have been pitch dark had it not been for the flickering candles on the table beside the bent, gray head of the mumbling fortune teller, whose bony fingers twitched over and about the crystal globe like wiggling serpents' tails. The window gave little or no light and the door was closed, the grinning grandson leaning against it limply. The picture was a weird, uncanny one, despite the gay, lightsome appearance of the visitors. The old woman, in high, shrill tones, had commanded silence. men obeyed with grim skepticism, while the women seemed really awed by their surroundings.

The witch began by reading the fortune of John Tullis, who had been pushed forward by the wide-eyed prince. In a cackling monotone she rambled through a supposititious history of his past, for the chief part so unintelligible that even he could not gainstay the statements. Later, she bent her piercing eyes upon the prince and refused to read his future, shrilly asserting that she had not the courage to tell what might befall the little ruler, all the while muttering something about the two little princes who had died in a tower ages and ages ago. Seeing that the boy was frightened, Tullis withdrew him to the background. The Countess Marlanx, who had returned that morning to Edelweiss as mysteriously as she had left, came next. She was smiling derisively.

"You have just returned from a visit to some one whom you hate," began the witch. "He is your husband. You will marry again. There is a fair-haired man in love with you. You are in love with him. I can see trouble

in---'

But the countess deliberately turned away from the table, her cheeks flaming with the consciousness that a smile had swept the circle behind her graceful back.

"Ridiculous," she said, and avoided John Tullis' gaze. "I don't care to hear any more. Come, baron! You are next."

Truxton King, subdued and troubled in his mind, found himself studying his surroundings and the people who went so far to make them interesting. He glanced from time to time at the delicate, eager profile of the girl beside him; at the soft, warm cheek and the caressing brown hair; at the little ear and the white slim neck of her—and realized just what had happened to him. He had fallen in love; that was the plain upshot of it. It had come to pass, just as he had hoped it would in his dearest dreams. He was face to face with the girl of royal blood that the story books had created for him long, long ago, and he was doing just what he had always intended to do; falling heels over head and hopelessly in love with her. Never had he seen hair grow so exquisitely about the temples and neck as this one's hair-but, just to confound his budding singleness of interest, his gaze at that instant wandered off and fell upon something that caused him to stare hard at a certain spot far removed from the coiffure of a fair and dainty lady.

His eye had fallen upon a crack in the door that led to the kitchen, although he had no means of knowing that it was a kitchen. To his amazement, a gleaming eye was looking out upon the room from beyond this narrow crack. He looked long and found that he was not mistaken. There was an eye, glued close to the opposite side of the rickety door, and its gaze was directed to the Countess Marlanx.

The spirit of adventure, recklessness, bravado—whatever you may choose to call it—flared high in the soul of this self-despised outsider. He could feel a strange thrill of exaltation shooting through his veins; he knew as well as he knew anything that he was destined to create commotion in that stately crowd, even against his better judgment. The desire to spring forward

and throw open the door, thus exposing a probable confederate, was stronger than he had the power to resist. Even as he sought vainly to hold himself in check, he became conscious that the staring eye was meeting his own in a glare of realization.

Without pausing to consider the result of his action, he sprang across the room, shouting as he did so that there was a man behind the door. Grasping the latch, he threw the door wide open, the others in the room looking at him as if he were suddenly crazed.

He had expected to confront the owner of that basilisk eye. There was not a sign of a human being in sight. Beyond was a black little room, at the back of which stood an old cooking stove with a fire going and a kettle singing. He leaped through, prepared to grasp the mysterious watcher, but, to his utter amazement, the kitchen was absolutely empty, save for inanimate things. His surprise was so genuine. that it was not to be mistaken by the men who leaped to his side. He had time to note that two of them carried pistols in their hands, and that Tullis and Quinnox had placed themselves between the prince and possible danger.

There was instant commotion, with cries and exclamations from all. Quick as the others were, the old woman was at his side before them, snarling with rage. Her talon-like fingers sunk into his arm, and her gaze went darting about the room in a most convincing way. Some minutes passed before the old woman could be quieted. Then King explained his action. He swore solemnly, if sheepishly, that he could not have been mistaken, and yet the owner of that eye had vanished as if swallowed up by the mountain.

Baron Dangloss was convinced that the young man had seen the eye. Without compunction he began a search of the room, the old woman looking on with a grin of glee.

"Search! Search!" she croaked. "It was the spirit eye! It is looking at you now, my fine baron! It finds you, yet cannot be found. No, no! Oh, you fools! Get out! Get out! All of you!

Prince or no prince, I fear you not, nor all your armies. This is my home! My castle! Go! Go!"

"There was a man here, old woman," said the baron coolly. "Where is he? What is your game? I am not to be fooled by these damnable tricks of yours. Where is the man?"

She laughed aloud, a horrid sound. The prince clutched Tullis by the leg

"Brace up, Bobby," whispered his big friend, leaning down to comfort him. "Be a man!"

"It—it's mighty hard," chattered Bobby, but he squared his little shoulders.

The ladies of the party had edged forward, peering into the kitchen, alarm having passed, although the exclamation "Boo!" would have played havoc with their courage.

"I swear there was some one looking through that crack," protested King, wiping his brow in confusion. "Miss—er—I should say—you could have seen it from where you stood," he pleaded, turning to the lady in gray.

"I've always wanted to see some one snooping."

"There is no window, no trapdoor, no skylight," remarked the baron, puzzled. "Nothing but the stovepipe, six inches in diameter. A man couldn't crawl out of that, I'm sure. Mr. King, we've come upon a real mystery. The eye without a visible body."

"I'm sure I saw it," reiterated Truxton. The prince's aunt was actually laughing at him. But so was the witch, for that matter. He didn't mind the witch

Suddenly the old woman stepped into the middle of the room and began to wave her hands in a mysterious manner over an empty pot that stood on the floor in front of the stove. The others drew back, watching her with the greatest curiosity.

A droning song oozed from the thin lips; the gesticulations grew in weirdness and fervor. Then, before their startled eyes, a thin film of smoke began to rise from the empty pot. It

grew in volume until the room was quite dense with it. Even more quickly than it began it disappeared, drawn apparently by some supernatural agency into the draught of the stove and out through the rickety chimney pipe. Even Dangloss blinked his eyes, and not because they were filled with smoke.

A deafening crash, as of many guns, came to their ears from the outside. With one accord, the entire party rushed to the outer door, a wild laugh from the hag pursning them.

"There!" she screamed. "There goes all there was of him! And so shall we all go some day. Fire and smoke!"

Not one there but thought on the instant of the Arabian Nights and the genii who went up in smoke—those never-to-be-forgotten tales of wonder.

Just outside the door stood Lieutenant Saffo of the guard, his hand to his cap. He was scarcely distinguishable, so dark had the day become.

"Good Lord!" shouted Tullis.
"What's the matter? What has hap-

pened?"

"The storm, sir;" said Saffo. "It is coming down the valley like the wind." A great crash of thunder burst overhead and lightning darted through the black, swirling skies.

"Very sudden, sir," added Mr. Hobbs, from behind. "Like a puff of

wind, sir."

The witch stood in the door behind them, smiling as amiably as it was pos-

sible for her to smile.

"Come in," she said. "There's room for all of you. The spirits have gone. Ha, ha! My merry man! Even the eye has gone. Come in, your highness. Accept the best I can offer—shelter from the hurricane. I've seen many, but this looks to be the worst. So it came sudden, eh? Ha, ha!"

The roar of wind and rain in the trees above seemed like a howl of confirmation. Into the hovel crowded the dismayed pleasure seekers, followed by the soldiers who had made the horses fast at the first sign of the storm.

Down came the rain in torrents, whisked and driven, whirled and shot by the howling winds, split by the lightning, and urged to greater glee by the deafening applause of the thunder. Apple carts in the skies!

Out in the dooryard the merry grandson of the witch was dancing as

if possessed by reveling devils.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Washing the dead men's bones" was the remark King made a few minutes later. The storm was at its height; the sheets of rain that swept down the pebbly glen elicited the gruesome sentence. He stood directly behind the quaking Loraine, quite close to the open door; there is no doubt that the observation was intended for her ears, maliciously or otherwise.

She gave him an awed glance, but no verbal response. It was readily to be seen that she was terrified by the violence of the mountain tornado. As if to shame him for the frivolous remark, she studdenly changed her position, putting herself behind him.

"I like that," he remonstrated, emboldened by the elements. "You leave me in front to be struck by the first bolt of lightning that comes along. And I a stranger, too."

And I a stranger, too."
"Isn't it awful?" she murmured, her fingers in her ears, her eyes tightly closed. "Do you think we'll be

struck?"

"Certainly not," he assured her. "This is a charmed spot. It's a frolic of her particular devils. She waves her hand; all the goblins and thunderworkers in this neck of the woods hustle up to see what's the matter. Then there's an awful rumpus. In a minute or two she'll wave her hand, and—presto! It will stop raining. But," with a distressed look out into the thick of it, "it would be a beastly joke if lightning should happen to strike that nag of mine. I'd not only have to walk to town, but I'd have to pay three prices for the brute."

"I think she's perfectly—ooh!—perfectly wonderful. Goodness, that was a crash! Where do you think it

struck?"

"If you'll stand over here a little closer, I'll point out the tree. See? Right down the ravine there? See the big limb swaying? That's the place. The old lady is carrying her joke too far. That's pretty close home. Stand right there, please. I won't let it rain in on you."

"You are very good, Mr. King. I—I've always thought I loved a storm. Ooh! But this is too terrible! Aren't you really afraid you'll be struck? Thanks, ever so much." He had squared himself between her and the door, turning his back upon the storm; but not through cowardice, as one might suppose.

"Don't mention it. I won't mind it so much, don't you know, if I get struck in the back. How long ago did

you say it was that you went to school with my sister?"

All this time the witch was haranguing her huddled audience, cursing the soldiers, laughing gleefully in the faces of her stately, scornful guests, greatly to the irritation of Baron Dangloss, toward whom she showed an especial attention.

Tullis was holding the prince in his arms. Colonel Quinnox stood before them, keeping the babbling, leering beldame from thrusting her face close to that of the terrified boy. Young Vos Engo glowered at Truxton King from the opposite side of the room. Mr. Hobbs had safely ensconced himself in the rear of the six guardsmen who stood near the door, ready to dash forth if by any chance the terrified horses should succeed in breaking away.

The Countess Marlanx, pale and

The Countess Marlanx, pale and rigid, her wondrous eyes glowing with excitement, stood behind John Tullis, straight and strong, like a storm spirit glorying in the havoc that raged about her. Time and again she leaned forward to utter words of encouragement in the ear of the little prince, never without receiving a look of gratitude and surprise from his tall protector.

And all this time the gooseherd grandson of the witch was dancing his wild, uncanny solo in the thick of the brew, an exalted grin on his face, strange cries of delight breaking from his lips; a horrid spectacle that fascinated the observers.

With incredible swiftness the storm passed. Almost at its height, there came a cessation of the roaring tempest, the downpour was checked, the thunder died away, and the lightning trickled off into faint flashes. The sky cleared as if by magic. The exhibition, if you please, was over!

Even the most stoical, unimpressionable men in the party looked at each other in bewilderment, and—awe, there was no doubt of it. The glare that Dangloss bent upon the hag proved that he had been rudely shaken from his habitual complacency.

"It is the most amazing thing I've ever seen," he said, over and over

The Countess Marlanx was trembling violently. Tullis, observing this, tried to laugh away her nervousness.

"Mere coincidence, that's all," he said. "Surely, you are not superstitious. You can't believe she brought

about the storm?"

"It isn't that," she said, in a low voice. "I feel as if a grave personal danger had just passed me by. Not danger for the rest of you, but for me alone. That is the sensation I have; the feeling of one who has stepped back from the brink of an abyss just in time to avoid being pushed over. I can't make you understand. See! I am trembling. I have seen no more than the rest of you, yet am more terrified, more upset than Robin, poor child. Perhaps I am foolish. I know that something dreadful has—I might say, touched me. Something that no one else could have seen or felt."

"Nerves, my dear countess. Shadows! I used to see them and feel them when I was a lad, no bigger than Bobby, if left alone in the dark. It is a grown-up fear of goblins. You'll be over it as soon as we are outside."

Ten minutes later, the cavalcade started down the rain-swept road toward the city, dry blankets having been placed across the saddles occupied by the ladies and the prince. The witch OCTO

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stood in her doorway, laughing gleefully, inviting them to come often.

"Come again, your highness," she

croaked sarcastically.

"The next time I come it will be with a torch to burn you alive!" shouted back Dangloss. To Tullis he added: "Gad, sir, they did well to burn witches in your town of Salem. You cleared the country of them, the pests."

Darkness was approaching fast among the sombre hills; the great pass was enveloped in the mists and the gloaming of early night. In a compact body, the guardsmen rode close about Prince Robin and his friend. Ingomede had urged this upon Tullis, still oppressed by the feeling of disaster that had come over her in the

hovel.

"It means something, my friend, it means something," she insisted. feel it-I am sure of it." Riding quite close beside him, she added in lower tones: "I was with my husband no longer ago than yesterday. Do you know that I believe it is Count Marlanx that I feel everywhere about me now? He—his presence—is in the air! Oh, I wish I could make you feel as I

"You haven't told me why you ran away on Sunday," he said, dismissing her argument with small ceremony.

"He sent for me. I-I had to go." There was a new, strange expression in her eyes that puzzled him for a long time. Suddenly the solution came; she was completely captive to the will of this hated husband. The realization brought a distinct, sickening shock with

Down through the lowering shades rode the prince's party, swiftly, even gayly by virtue of relaxation from the strain of a weird half hour. No one revealed the slightest sign of apprehension arising from the mysterious demonstration in which nature had

taken a hand.

Truxton King was holding forth, with cynical good humor, for the benefit if not the edification of Baron Dangloss, with whom he rode-Mr. Hobbs galloping behind, not unlike the

faithful Sancho of another Quixote's

day.
"It's all tommy rot, baron," said Truxton. "We've got a dozen stage wizards in New York who can do all she did, and then some. That smoke from the kettle is a corking good trick—but that's all it is, take my word for it. The storm? Why, you know as well as I do, baron, that she can't bring rain like that. If she could, they'd have her over in the United States right now, saving the crops, with or without water. That was chance. Hobbs told me this morning it looked like rain. By the way, I must apologize to him. I said he was a crazy killjoy. The thing that puzzles me is what became of the owner of that eye. I'll stake my life on it, I saw an eye. 'Gad, it looked right into mine. Queerest feeling, it gave me."

"Ah, that's it, my young friend. What became of the eye? Poof! And it is gone. We searched immediately. No sign. It is most extraordinary.

"I'll admit it's rather gruesome, but I say, do you know I've a mind to look into that matter if you don't object, baron? It's a game of some sort. She's a wily old dame, but I think if we go about it right, we can catch her napping and expose the whole game. I'm going back there in a day or two and try to get at the bottom of it. That confounded eye worries me. She's laughing up her sleeve at us, too, you know.

"I should advise you to keep away from her, my friend. Granted she has tricked us; why not? It is her trade. She does no harm-except that she's most offensively impudent. And I rather imagine she'll resent your investigations, if you attempt it. I can't say that I'd blame her." The baron

laughed.

"Baron, it struck me a bit shivery at the time, but I want to say to you now that the eye that I saw at the crack was not that of an idle peeper, nor was it a mere faker's substitute. It was as malevolent as the devil, and it glared-do you understand? Glared! It didn't peep!

Truxton King, for reasons best known to himself, soon relapsed into a thoughtful, contemplative silence. Between us, he was sorely vexed and disappointed. When the gallant start was made from the glen of "dead men's bones," he found that he was to be cast utterly aside, quite completely ignored by the fair Loraine. She rode off with young Count Vos Engo without so much as a friendly wave of the hand to him. He said it over to himself several times: "Not even a friendly wave of her hand." It was as if she had forgotten his existence, or-merciful powers!-what was worse; as if she took this way of showing him his place. Of course, that being her attitude, he glumly found his placewhich turned out rather ironically to be under the eye of a police officer -and made up his mind that he would

Vos Engo, being an officer in the Royal Guard, rode ahead by order of Colonel Quinnox. Truxton, therefore, had her back in view-at rather a vexing distance, too-for mile after mile of the ride to the city. Not so far ahead, however, that he could not observe every movement of her light, graceful figure as she swept down the King's Highway. She was a perfect horsewoman, firm, jaunty, free. Somehow, he knew, without seeing, that a stray brown wisp of hair caressed her face with insistent adoration; he could see her hand go up from time to time to brush it back--just as if it were not a happy place for a wisp of hair. Perhaps—he shivered with the thought of it—perhaps it even caressed her lips. Ah, who would not be a wisp of brown hair!

He galloped along beside the baron, a prey to gloomy considerations. What was the use? He had no chance to win her. That was for story books and plays. She belonged to another world—far above his. And even beyond that, she was not likely to be attracted by such a rude, ungainly, sunburned lout as he, with such chaps about as Vos Engo, or that what's-his-name fellow, or a dozen others whom he had

seen. Confound it all, she was meant for a prince or an archduke. What chance had he?

But, she was the loveliest creature he had ever seen. Yes; she was the golden girl of his dreams. Within his grasp, so to speak, and yet he could not hope to seize her, after all. Was she meant for that popinjay youth with the petulant eye and the sullen jaw? Was he to be the lucky man, this Vos Engo?

The baron's dry, insinuating voice broke in upon the young man's thoughts. "I think it's pretty well understood that she's going to marry him." The little old minister had been reading King's thoughts; he had the satisfaction of seeing his victim start, guiltily. It was on the tip of Truxton's tongue to blurt out: "How the devil did you know what I was thinking about?" But he managed to control himself, asking instead, with bland

"Indeed? Is it a good match, baron?"
The baron smiled. "I think so. He
has been a trifle wild, but I believe he
has settled down. Splendid family.
He is desperately in love, as you may
have noted."

interest:

"I hadn't thought much about it. Is she in love with him?"

"She sees a great deal of him," was the diplomatic answer. Truxton considered well for a min-

ute or two, and then bluntly asked:
"Would you mind telling me just
who she is, baron? What is her name?"

Dangloss was truly startled. He gave the young man a quick, penetrating glance; then, a set, hard expression came into his eyes.

"Do you mean, sir, that you don't know her?" he asked, almost harshly. "I don't know her name."

"And you had the effrontery to—my excellent friend, you amaze me. I can't believe it of you. Why, sir, how dare you say this to me? I know that Americans are bold, but, by gad, sir, I've always looked upon them as gentlemen. You—"

"Hold on, Baron Dangloss," interrupted Truxton, very red in the face. "Don't say it, please. You'd better hear my side of the story first. She went to school with my sister. She knows me, but, confound it, sir, she refuses to tell me who she is. Do you think that is fair? Now, I'll tell you how it came about." He related the story of the goldfish and the pin hook. The baron smiled comfortably to himself, a sphinxlike expression coming into his beady eyes as he stared steadily on ahead; her trim gray back seemed to encourage his admiring

smile.

"Well, my boy, if she elects to keep you in the dark concerning her name, it is not for me to betray her," he said at the end of the recital. "Ladies in her position, I dare say, enjoy these little mysteries. If she wants you to know, she'll tell you. Perhaps it would be well for you to be properly, officially, presented to her hi—to the young lady. Your countryman, Mr. Tullis, will be glad to do so, I fancy. But, let me suggest; don't permit your ingenuousness to get the better of you again. She's having sport with you on account of it. We all know her propensities."

It was dusk when they entered the northern gates. Above the castle, King said good-by to Tullis and the countess, gravely saluted the sleepy prince, and followed Mr. Hobbs off to the heart of the city. He was hot with resentment. Either she had forgotten to say good-by to him or had willfully decided to ignore him altogether; at any rate, she entered the gates to the castle grounds without so much as a

glance in his direction.

Truxton knew in advance that he was to have a sleepless, unhappy night.

In his room at the hotel, he found the second anonymous letter, unquestionably from the same source, but this time printed in crude, stilted letters. It had been stuck under the door, together with some letters that had been forwarded from Teheran.

Leave the city at once. You are in great danger. Save yourself!

This time he did not laugh. That it

was from Olga Platanova he made no doubt. But why she should interest herself so persistently in his welfare was quite beyond him, knowing as he did that in no sense had he appealed to her susceptibility. And what, after all, could she mean by "great danger"? "Save yourself!" He sat for a long time considering the situation. At last he struck the window sill a resounding thwack with his fist and announced his decision to the silent, disinterested

wall opposite.

"I'll take her advice. I'll get out. Not because I'm afraid to stay, but because there's no use. She's got no eyes for me. I'm a plain impossibility, so far as she's concerned. It's Vos Engo—damned little rat! Old Dangloss came within an ace of speaking of her as 'her highness.' That's enough for me. That means she's a princess. It's ail very nice in novels, but in real life men don't go about picking up any princess they happen to like. No, sir! I might just as well get out while I can. She treated me as if I were a yellow dog to-day—after I'd been damned agreeable to her, too, standing between her and the lightning. I might have been struck. I wonder if she would have been grateful. No, she wouldn't. She'd have said: 'Wasn't it lucky?'"

He picked up the note once more. "If I were a story-book hero, I'd stick this thing in my pocket and set out by myself to unravel the mystery behind it. But I've chucked the hero job, for good and all. I'm going to hand this over to Dangloss. It's the sensible thing to do, even if it isn't what a would-be hero in search of a princess ought to do. What's more, I'll hunt the baron up this very hour. Hope it doesn't get Olga into trouble."

He indulged in another long spell of thoughtfulness. "No, by George, I'll not turn tail at the first sign of danger. I'll stay here and assist Dangloss in unraveling this matter. And I'll go up to that witch's hole before I'm a day older, to have it out with her. I'll find out where the smoke came from, and I'll know where that eye went to." He

sighed without knowing it. "By Jove, I'd like to do something to show her I'm not the blooming duffer she thinks I am."

He could not find Baron Dangloss that night, nor early the next day. Hobbs, after being stigmatized as the only British coward in the world, changed his mind and made ready to accompany King to the hovel in Ganlook Gap.

By noon the streets in the vicinity of the plaza were filled with strange, rough-looking men, undeniably labor-

"Who are they?" demanded King, as they rode past a particularly sullen, forbidding crowd at the corner below the city hall.

"There's a strike on among the men who are building the railroad," said Hobbs. "Ugly-looking crowd, eh?"

"A strike? Gad, it's positively homelike."

"I heard a bit ago that the matter has been adjusted. They go back to work to-morrow, slight increase in pay and a big decrease in work. They were to have had their answer to-day. Mr. Tullis, I hear, was instrumental in having the business settled without a row."

"They'd better look out for these fellows," said King, very soberly, "I don't like the appearance of 'em. They look like cutthroats."

"Take my word for it, sir, they are. They're the riffraff of all Europe. You should have seen them of a Sunday, sir, before the order went out closing the drinking places on that day. My word, they took the town. There was no living here for the decent people. Women couldn't go out of their houses."

"I hope Baron Dangloss knows how to handle them?" in some anxiety. "By the way, remind me to look up the baron just as soon as we get back to town this evening."

"If we ever get back!" muttered the unhappy Mr. Hobbs. Prophetic lamentation!

In due time, they rode into the sombre solitudes of Ganlook Gap and up to the witch's glen. Here Mr. Hobbs balked. He refused to adventure farther than the mouth of the stony ravine. Truxton approached the hovel alone, without the slightest trepidation. The gooseherd grandson was driving a flock of geese across the green bowl below the cabin. The American called out to him, and a moment later the youth, considerably excited, drove his geese up to the door. He could understand no English, nor could Truxton make out what he was saying in the native tongue. While they were vainly haranguing each other, the old woman appeared at the edge of the thicket above the hut. Uttering shrill exclamations, she hurried down to confront King with blazing eyes. He fell back, momentarily dismayed. Her horrid grin of derision brought a flush to his cheek; he faced her quite coolly.

"I'll lay you a hundred gavvos that the kettle and smoke experiment is a fake of the worst sort," he announced, after a somewhat lengthy appeal to be allowed to enter the hut as a simple seeker after knowledge.

"Have it your own way! Have it your own way!" she cackled.

"Tell you what I'll do; if I can't expose that trick in ten minutes I'll make you a present of a hundred gavvos."

She took him up like a flash, a fact which startled and disconcerted him not a little. Her very eagerness augured ill for his proposition. Still, he was in for it, he was determined to get inside the hut and solve the mystery, if it were possible. Exposure of the witch would at least attract the interest if not the approval of a certain young lady in purple and fine linen. That was surely worth while.

With a low, mocking bow, the shriveled hag stood aside and motioned for him to precede her into the hovel. He looked back at Mr. Hobbs. That gentleman's eyes seemed to be starting from his head.

"A hundred gavvos is a fortune not easily to be won," said the old dame. "How can I be sure that you will pay me if you lose?"

"It is in my pocket, madam. If I don't pay, you may instruct your ex-

cellent grandson to crack me over the head. He looks as though he'd do it for a good deal less money, I'll say

that for him.

"He is honest-as honest as his grandmother," cried the old woman. Now, what is it you want to do?"

They were standing in the centre of the wretched living room. The goose boy was in the door, looking on with strangely alert, questioning eyes, ever and anon peering over his shoulder toward the spot where Hobbs stood with the horses. He seldom took his gaze from the face of the old woman, a ratlike smile touching the corners of his fuzz-lined lips.

"I want to go through that kitchen, just to satisfy myself of one or two things." King was looking hard at the crack in the kitchen door. Suddenly he

started as if shot.

The staring, burning eye was again looking straight at him from the

jagged crack in the door!
"I'll get you this time," he shouted, crossing the room in two eager leaps. The door responded instantly to his violent clutch, swung open with a bang, and disclosed the interior of the queer little kitchen.

The owner of that mocking, phan-

tom eye was gone!

Like a frantic dog, Truxton dashed about the little kitchen, looking in every corner, every crack, for signs of the thing he chased. At last he paused, baffled, mystified. The old woman was standing in the middle of the outer room, grinning at him with what was meant for complacency, but which struck him at once as genuine malevo-

"Ha, ha!" she croaked. "You fool! You fool! Search! Smell him out! All the good it will do you! Ha, ha!"

"By gad, I will get at the bottom of this!" shouted Truxton, stubborn rage possessing him. "There's some one here, and I know it. I'm not such a fool as to believe—— Say! What's that? The ceiling! By the eternal, that scraping noise explains it! There's where the secret trapdoor is-in the ceiling! Within arm's reach, at that!

Watch me, old woman! I'll have your spry friend out of his nest in the shake

of a lamb's tail.'

The hag was standing in the kitchen door now, still grinning evilly. She watched the eager young man pound upon the low ceiling with a threelegged stool that he had seized from

"I don't see how he got up there so quickly, though. He must be like greased lightning."

He was pounding vigorously on the roughly boarded ceiling when the sharp voice of the old woman, raised in command, caused him to lower the stool and turn upon her with gleaming, triumphant eyes. The look he saw in her face was sufficient to check his enterprise for the moment. He dropped the stool and started toward her, his arms extended to catch her swaying form. The look of the dying was in her eyes; she seemed to be crumpling before him.

He reached her in time, his strong arms grasping the frail, bent figure as it sank to the floor. As he lifted her bodily from her feet, intent upon carrying her to the open air, her bony fingers sank into his arm with the grip of death, and—could he believe his ears? -a low, mocking laugh came from her

Down where the pebbly house yard merged into the mossy banks, Mr. Hobbs sat tight, still staring with gloomy eyes at the dark little hut up the glen. His sturdy knees were pressing the skirts of the saddle with a firmness that left no room for doubt as to the tension his nerves were under. Now and then he murmured "My word!" but in what connection it is doubtful if even he could tell. A quarter of an hour had passed since King disappeared through the doorway; Mr. Hobbs was getting nervous.

The shiftless, lanky gooseherd came forth in time, and lazily drove his scattered flock off into the lower glen.

The horses were becoming impatient. To his extreme discomfort, not to say apprehension, they were constantly pricking their ears forward and snorting in the direction of the hovel; a very puzzling circumstance, thought Mr. Hobbs. At this point he began to say "dammit," and with some sense of ap-

preciation, too.

Presently his eye caught sight of a thin stream of smoke, rather black than blue, arising from the little chimney at the rear of the cabin. His eyes flew very wide open; his heart experienced a sudden throbless moment; his mind leaped backward to the unexplained smoke mystery of the day before. It was on the end of his tongue to cry out to his unseen patron, to urge him to leave the witch to her deviltry and come along home, when the old woman herself appeared in the doorway—alone.

She sat down upon the doorstep, puffing away at a long pipe, her hooded face almost invisible from the distance which he resolutely held. He felt that she was eying him with grim interest. For a few minutes he waited, a sickening doubt growing up in his soul. A single glance showed him that the chimney was no longer emitting smoke. It seemed to him that the old woman was losing all semblance of life. She was no more than a black, inanimate heap of rags piled against the door

jamb.

Hobbs let out a shout. The horses plunged viciously. Slowly the bundle of rags took shape. The old woman arose and hobbled toward him, leaning upon a great cane.

"Whe-where's Mr. King?" called

out Hobbs.

She stopped above him and he could see her face. Mr. Hobbs was chilled to the bone. Her arm was raised, a bony finger pointing to the treetops

above her hovel.

"He's gone. Didn't you see him? He went off among the treetops. You won't see him again." She waited a moment, and then went on, in most ingratiating tones: "Would you care to come into my house? I can show you the road he took. You—"

But Mr. Hobbs, his hair on end, had dropped the rein of King's horse and was putting boot to his own beast, whirling frantically into the path that led away from the hated, damned spot! Down the road he crashed, pursued by witches whose persistence put to shame the efforts of those famed ladies of Tam O'Shanter in the long ago; if he had looked over his shoulder, he might have discovered that he was followed by a riderless horse, nothing more.

But a riderless horse is a gruesome

thing-sometimes.

CHAPTER IX.

The further adventures of Mr. Hobbs on this memorable afternoon are quickly chronicled, notwithstanding the fact that he lived an age while they were transpiring, and experienced sensations that would still be fresh in his memory if he lived to be a hundred.

He was scarcely well out of sight of the cabin when his conscience began to smite him; after all, his patron might be in dire need of his services, and here he was, fleeing from an old woman and a whiff of smoke! Hobbs was not a physical coward, but it took more than a mile of hard-ridden conscience to bring his horse to a standstill. Then, with his heart in his mouth, he slowly began to retrace his steps, walking where he had galloped a moment before. A turn in the road brought him in view of something that caused him to draw rein sharply. A hundred yards ahead, five or six men were struggling with a riderless bay horse.

"My Gawd!" ejaculated Hobbs. "It's his horse! I might have known!"

He looked eagerly for his patron. There was no sign of him, so Hobbs rode slowly forward, intent upon asking the woodmen—for such they appeared to be—to accompany him to the glen, now but a short distance ahead.

As he drew nearer it struck him forcibly that the men were not what he had thought them to be. They were an evil-looking lot, more like the strikers he had seen in the town earlier in the day. Even as he was turning the new thought over in his mind one of them stepped out of the little knot, and,

without a word of warning, lifted his arm and fired pointblank at the little Englishman. A pistol ball whizzed close by his head. His horse leaped to the side of the road in terror, almost

unseating him.

But Hobbs had fighting blood in his veins. What is more to the point, he had a revolver in his pocket. He jerked it out and, despite a second shot from the picket, prepared to ride down upon the party. An instant later half a dozen revolvers were blazing away Hobbs turned at once and at him. rode in the opposite direction, whirling to fire twice at the unfriendly group. Soon he was out of range and at leisure. He saw the futility of any attempt to pass them. The only thing left for him to do was to ride as quickly as possible to the city and give the alarm; at the same time, to acquaint the police with the deliberate assault of the desperadoes.

His mind was so full of the disaster to Truxton King—he did not doubt for an instant that he had been destroyed by the sorceress—that he gave little thought to his own encounter with the rascals in the roadway. He had come to like the impetuous young man with the open purse and the open heart. Despite his waywardness to the last degree in matters conventional, he could not but admire him for the smile he had and the courage that never failed him, even when the smile met the frown of

rebuke.

Riding swiftly through the narrow, sunless defile, he was nearing the point where the road connected with the open highway; from there on the way was easy and devoid of peril. Suddenly his horse swerved and leaped furiously out of stride, stumbling but recovering himself almost instantaneously. In the same second he heard the sharp crack of a firearm, far down the unbroken ravine to his left. A second shot came, this time from the right, and quite close at hand. His horse was staggering, swaying-then down he crashed, Hobbs swinging clear barely in time to escape being pinioned to the ground. A stream of blood was pouring from the side of the poor beast. Aghast at this unheard-of wantonness, the little interpreter knew not which way to turn, but stood there dazed until a third shot brought him to his senses. The bullet kicked up the dust near his feet. He scrambled for the heavy underbrush at the roadside and darted off into the forest, his revolver in his hand, his heart palpitating like mad. Time and again, as he fled through the dark thickets, he heard the hoarse shouts of men in the distance. It dawned upon him at last that there had been an uprising of some kind in the city, that there were rioting and murder going on, that these men were not ordinary bandits, but desperate strikers in quest of satisfaction for grievances ignored.

Night came and he dropped to the soft, dank earth, utterly exhausted and absolutely lost for the time being in the

pathless hills.

At ten o'clock the next morning Colonel Quinnox and a company of soldiers, riding from the city gates toward the north in response to a call for help from honest herders who reported attacks and robberies of an alarming nature, came upon the stiff, footsore, thorn-scratched Mr. Hobbs not far from the walls of the town. The colonel was not long in grasping the substance of Hobbs' revelations. He rode off at once for the witch's hovel, sending Hobbs with a small, instructed escort to the castle, where Baron Dangloss was in consultation with Mr. Tullis and certain ministers.

The city was peaceful enough, much to the surprise of Hobbs. No disturbance had been reported, said the guardsmen who rode beside him. Up in the hills there had been some depre-

dations, but that was all.

"All?" groaned Mr. Hobbs. "All? Hang it all, man, wot do you call all? You haven't heard 'alf all of it yet. I tell you, there's been the devil to pay. Wait till the colonel comes back from Ganlook Gap. He'll have news for you; take it from me, he will. That poor chap 'as gone up in smoke, as sure as my name's Hobbs."

They met Baron Dangloss near the

barracks, across the park from the castle. He was in close, earnest conversation with John Tullis and Count Halfont, both of whom seemed to be laboring under intense excitement. Over by the arsenal, the little prince, attended by his Aunt Loraine and Count Vos Engo—with two mechanical guardsmen in the background—was deep in conversation with Julius Spantz, the master of arms. If he had been near enough to hear he might have learned that Prince Robin's air gun was very much out of order and needed attention at once.

The arrival of Hobbs, a pitiful but heroic object, at once arrested the attention of every one. His story was heard by a most distinguished audience; in fact, Hobbs was near to exploding with his own suddenly acquired importance. Not only were there dark, serious looks from the men in the party, and distressed exclamations from the most beautiful young lady in the world—he had always said that of her—but he had the extreme unction of bringing tears to the eyes of a prince, and of hearing manfully suppressed sobs from the throat of the same august personage.

The looks that went round at the conclusion of his disjointed and oft-interrupted story, expressed something more than consternation.

"There is nothing supernatural about King's disappearance," said Tullis sharply. "That's all nonsense. He had money about him, and it perhaps turns out that there really was a man at the crack in the door—a clever brigand who to-day has got the better of our vainglorious friend. The shooting in the hills is more disturbing than this, to my mind. Gentlemen, you shouldn't lose any time in running these fellows down. It will mean trouble if it gets under way. They're an ugly lot."

"This mystery, coming on top of the other, is all the more difficult to understand. I mean the disappearance of the Countess Marlanx," said Baron Dangloss, pulling at his imperial in plain perplexity. "But we must not stop here talking. Will you come with me, Mr.

Tullis, to the tower? I shall send out my best man to work on the case of the lady. It is a most amazing thing. I still have hope that she will appear in person to explain the affair."

"I think not," said Tullis gloomily. "This looks like abduction-foul play, or whatever you choose to call it. She has never left her father's house in just this manner before. I believe, baron, that Marlanx has taken her away by force. She told me yesterday that she would never go back to him if she could help it. I have already given you my suspicions regarding his designs upon the-ahem!" Catching the eager gaze of the prince, he changed the word "throne" to "treasury." The baron nodded thoughtfully. "The countess attended the fête at Baron Pultz's last night, leaving at twelve o'clock. I said good night to her at the fountain and watched her until she passed through the gate between the baron's grounds and those of her father adjoining. She would not permit me to accompany her to the doors. Her maid had preceded her and was waiting just beyond the gate—at least, so she says to-day. It is less than two hundred feet from the gate to Perse's doorsteps. Well, she never crossed that space. Her maid waited for an hour near the fernery, and then came to the baron's. The countess has not been seen since she passed through the gate in the wall. I say that she has been carried away."

"The maid will be at my office at eleven, with the Duke of Perse and the house servants. I have detailed a man to look up this fellow Brutus you speak of, and to ascertain his whereabouts last night. Come, we will go to the tower. The duke is greatly distressed. He suspects foul play, I am confident, but he will not admit that Marlanx is responsible."

"But what about Mr. King?" piped up a small voice.

"Colonel Quinnox has gone to look for him, Bobby," began Tullis, frowning slightly. He was interested in but one human being at that moment.

"I want the old witch beheaded,"

said the prince. "Why don't you go, Uncle Jack? He's an American. He'd help you, I bet, if you were in dan-

Then he patted Tullis flushed. Prince Robin's shoulder and said, with

no little emotion in his voice:

"Perhaps I deserve the rebuke, Bobby, but you must not forget that there is a lady in distress. Which would you have me do-desert the lady whom we all love or the man whom we scarcely know?"

"The lady," said Bobby promptly. "Hasn't she got a husband to look after her? Mr. King has no friends, no relations, nothing. Aunt Loraine likes him and so do I."

"He's a fine chap," asserted Hobbs, and afterward marveled at his own te-

merity.

Loraine, her merry eyes now dark with anxiety, her cheeks white with resolution, turned upon John Tullis. "You might leave the rescue of the countess to the proper authorities-the police," she said calmly. "I think it is your duty as an American to head the search for Mr. King. If Count Marlanx has spirited his wife away, pray who had a better right?"

"But we are not sure that he-" "We are sure that Mr. King is either dead or in dire need of help,"

she interrupted hotly.

He looked at her in surprise, swayed

by two impulses.

"Colonel Quinnox is quite competent to conduct the search," he said shortly.

"But Colonel Quinnox has gone forth on another mission. He may be unable to give any of his time to the search for Mr. King. It is outrageous, John Tullis, to refuse help-

"I don't refuse help," he exclaimed. "They may take the whole army out to look for him, so far as I am concerned. But, I'll tell you this: I consider it my duty as a man to devote what strength I have to the service of a woman in trouble. That ends it! Come, baron; we will go to the tower."

The young woman looked at him with wide, comprehending eyes. Her lips trembled under the rebuke. Count Halfont intervened, hastily proposing that a second party be sent out at once with instructions to raze the witch's hut if necessary

"I shall be happy to lead the expedition," said young Count Vos Engo, bowing deeply to the young lady her-

"You shall, Vos Engo," said Halfont. "Prepare at once. Take ten men. I shall report to General Braze for

Tullis turned suddenly to the resentful girl. "Loraine," he said gently, as the others drew away, "don't be hard

with me. You don't understand."
"Yes, I do," she said stubbornly.
"You are in love with her."

"Yes; that's quite true."

"A married woman!"

"I can't help it. I must do all I can

She looked into his honest eyes for a

moment.

"Forgive me," she murmured, hang-g her head, "What is Mr. King to ing her head. "What is Mr. King to us, after all?" "He is simply paying for his fool-

hardiness. Americans do that the world over."

"Be careful that you do not pay for something worse than fooihardiness."

"I think you may trust me."

She smiled brightly up into his face. "Have your way, then. Remember that I am her friend, too." Then she hurried off after the prince and Vos Engo, who was already giving instructions to an attentive orderly.

"Poor Mr. King," she said to the prince, as they stood by watching the preparations. "I am afraid, Bobby, he can't came to your circus this week. I sent the invitation this morning, early. He may never receive it.

dreadful, Count Vos Engo?"

Count Vos Engo was politely concerned, but it should not be expected that, in his present state of mind regarding her, he could be seriously grieved by anything that might have happened to the rash American.

The guard about the prince was doubled; orders requiring the strictest care of his person were issued by Count Haifont. By this time, it may be suspected, the suspicions of John Tullis had been communicated to men high in the government; no small amount of credence was attached to them. Baron Dangloss began to see things in a different light; things that had puzzled him before now seemed clear. His office was the busiest place in Edelweiss.

"It is not unreasonable to suspect that Marlanx, or some of his agents, having concluded that the countess knew too much of their operations, and might not be a safe repository, decided to remove her before it was too late. Understand, gentlemen, I don't believe the countess is in sympathy with her husband's schemes—"

The Duke of Perse interrupted the doughty baron. "You assume a great deal, baron, in saying that he has

schemes inimical to the best interests of this country."

"I fancy that your grace will admit that your venerable son-in-law—who, if I mistake not, is some ten years your senior—has no great love for the reigning power in Graustark. We will pass that, however," said the baron pointedly. "We should be wise enough to guard against any move he may make; that is sufficient."

"I don't believe he has taken my daughter away by force. Why should he do so? She goes to him voluntarily at the end of each visit. There is no coercion." He met John Tullis' stony gaze without flinching. "I insist that she has been stolen by these brigands in the hills, to be held for ransom."

The stories of the maid, the footmen, the groundmen were all to the effect that the countess had not returned to her father's home after leaving the fête next door. There were no signs of a struggle in the garden, nor had there been the slightest noise to attract the attention of the waiting maid. It was not impossible, after all, that she had slipped away of her own accord, possessed of a sudden whim or impulse.

The new manservant, suspected by the countess herself, passed through the examination creditably. Tullis, of course, had not yet told Dangloss of the countess' own suspicions concerning this man. They were a part of their joint secret. The American felt sure, however, that this man knew more of the night's work than he had told. He conveyed this belief to Dangloss, and a close watch was set upon the fellow. More than once during the long afternoon John Tullis found himself wishing that he had that daredevil, thoroughbred, young countryman of his, Truxton King, beside him; something told him that the young man would prove a treasure in resourcefulness and activity.

Late in the afternoon, a telegram was brought to Tullis which upset all of their calculations and caused the minister of police to swear softly in pure disgust. It was from the Countess Marlanx herself, sent from Porvrak, a station far down the railway in the direction of Vienna. It was self-

explanatory:

I am going to Schloss Marlanx, there to end my days. There is no hope for me. I go voluntarily. Will you not understand why I am leaving Edelweiss? You must know.

Tullis was dumfounded. He caught the penetrating glance of Dangloss and flushed under the sudden knowledge that this shrewd old man also understood why she was leaving Edelweiss. Because of him! Because she loved him and would not be near him. His heart swelled exultantly in the next moment; a brave resolve was born within him.

"We don't need a key to that, my boy," said the baron indulgently. "But I will say that she has damned little consideration for you when she steals away in the dead of night, without a word. In a ball dress, too. Unfeeling, I'd say. Well, we can devote our attention to Mr. King, who is lost."

"See here, baron," said Tullis, after a moment, "I want you to give me a couple of good men for a few days. I'm going to Schloss Marlanx. I'll get her away from that place if I have to kill Marlanx and swing for it."

At seven o'clock that night, accompanied by two clever secret-service men, Tullis boarded the train for the west. A man who stood in the tobacconist's shop on the station platform smiled quietly to himself as the train pulled out. Then he walked briskly away. It was Peter Brutus, the lawyer.

A most alluring trap had been set

for John Tullis!

The party that had gone to Ganlook Gap in charge of Count Vos Engo returned at nightfall, no wiser than when it left the barracks at noon. Riding bravely but somewhat dejectedly beside the handsome young officer in command was a girl in gray. It was her presence with the troop that had created comment at the gates earlier in the day. No one could understand why she was riding forth upon what looked to be a dangerous mission. Least of all, Count Vos Engo, who had striven vainly to dissuade her from the purpose to accompany the soldiers.

Now she was coming home with them, silent, subdued, dispirited—even more so than she allowed the count to

see.

"I was hateful to him yesterday," she said penitently, as they rode into the city.

Vos Engo had been thinking of something else; the remark disturbed him.

"He was very presumptuous—yesterday," he said crossly.

She transfixed him with a look

meant to be reproachful.

"That's why I managed the ticket for Bobby's circus," she said, looking ahead with a genuinely mournful droop of her lip. "I was sorry for him. Oh, dear, oh, dear! What will his poor mother say—and his sister?"

"We've done all we can, Loraine. Except to cable," he added sourly.

"Yes, I suppose so. Poor fellow!"
Colonel Quinnox and his men had been scouring the hills for bandits. They arrived at the witch's cabin a few minutes after Vos Engo and his company. Disregarding the curses of the old woman, a thorough search of

the place was made. The forest, the ravine, the mountainside for a mile or more in all directions were gone over by the searchers. There was absolutely no sign of the missing man, nor was there the least indication that there had

been foul play.

The old woman's story, reflected by the grandson, was convincing so far as it went. She said that the young man remained behind in the kitchen to puzzle himself over the smoke mystery, while she went out to her doorstep. The man with the horses became frightened when she went down to explain the situation to him. He fled. A few minutes later the gentleman emerged, to find his horse gone, himself deserted. Cursing, he struck off down the glen in pursuit of his friend, and that was the last she saw of him. Not long afterward she heard shooting in the gap and sent her grandson to see if anything could have happened to her late visitor, who, it seems, owed her one hundred gavvos as a forfeit of some sort.

The further prosecution of the search was left to Colonel Quinnox and his men. Loraine, shuddering but resolute, had witnessed the ransacking of the hut, had urged the arrest of the hag, and had come away disheartened but satisfied that the woman had told them the truth. Quinnox's theory was accepted by all. He believed that King had fallen into the hands of brigands, and that a heavy ransom would be de-

manded for his release.

In a warm-tinted room at the castle, later on in the evening, the prince, in pajamas, was discoursing bravely on the idiosyncrasies of fate. His only auditor was the mournful Loraine, who sat beside the royal bed in which he wriggled vaguely. The attendants were far down the room.

"Never mind, Aunt Loraine, you can't help it. I'm just as sorry as you are. Say, are you in love with him?"

"In love with whom?"

"Mr. King."

"Of course not, silly. What an absurd question. I do not know him at all."

"That's all right, Aunt Loraine. I believe in love at first sight. He is a fine-"

"Bobby! Don't be foolish. How could I be in love with him?"

"Well, you can't help it sometimes. Even princes fall in love without knowing it."

"I suppose so," dreamily.

"It's mighty hard to make up your mind which one you love best, though. Doctor Barrett's daughter in New York is awful nice, but I think she's not—""

"She is twenty years older than you, Bobby, if you mean to say you are in love with her."

"Well, but I'll grow up, auntie. Anyhow, Paula Vedrowski is not so old as I. She is——"

"For Heaven's sake, Bobby, do go to sleep!"

"Don't you care to hear about my love affairs?"

"You are perfectly ridiculous!" she exclaimed.

"All right for you, auntie. I shan't listen when you want to tell me about yours. Gee, Uncle Jack listens, you bet. I wish he was here this minute. Say, is he ever going to get married?" There was no answer. He peered over the top of the pillow. There were tears in his Aunt Loraine's eyes. "Oh, say, auntie, darling, don't cry! I'll—I'll go to sleep, honest!"

She was not in love with Truxton King, but she was a fine, tender-hearted girl who suffered because of the thing that had happened to him and because she loved his sister.

Over in the Hotel Regengetz, on a little table in the centre of the room, lay a thick envelope with the royal arms emblazoned in the upper corner. It contained an invitation to the private circus that had been arranged for the little prince, and it bore the name of Truxton King.

Across the foot of the bed hung his evening clothes, laid out by a faithful and well-tipped house valet, snug and ready for instant use.

But where was Truxton King?

CHAPTER X.

When King, in the kindness of his heart, grasped the old woman to keep her from falling to the floor, he played directly into the hands of very material agencies under her control. There was nothing ghostly or even spiritual in the incidents that followed close upon the simulated fainting spell of the fortune teller. It has been said before that her bony fingers closed upon his arms in a far from feeble manner. He had no time for surprise at this sudden recovery; there was only time to see a fiendish grin flash into her face. The next instant, something struck him in the face; then, with a fierce jerk, this same object tightened about his neck. His attempt to yell out was checked before a sound could issue from his lips.

It all came to him in a flash. A noose had been dropped over his head; as he was pulled backward, his startled, bulging eyes swept the ceiling. The mystery was explained, but in a manner that left him small room for satisfaction. Above him a square opening had appeared in the ceiling; two ugly, bearded faces were leaning over the edge and strong hands were grasping a thick rope.

In a frenzy of fear and desperation he cast the old woman from him and tore violently at the rope.

They were drawing hard from above; his toes were barely touching the floor; he was strangling. Frantically he grasped the rope, lifting himself from the floor in the effort to loosen the noose with his free hand. hoarse laugh broke upon his dinning ears, the leering faces drew nearer; and then, as everything went black, a heavy yet merciful blow fell upon his head. As consciousness left him, he felt himself rushing dizzily upward, grasped by powerful hands, and whisked through the opening into air so hot and stifling that his last thought was of the fires of hell.

Not many minutes passed before consciousness, which had been but partially lost, returned to him. The ringing sensation remained in his head, but he was no longer choking. The noose had been removed from his neck; the rope itself was now serving as a bond for his hands and feet, a fact that impressed itself upon him when he tried to rise. For some time he lay perfectly still, urging his senses into play; wondering where he was and what had happened to him.

It was pitch dark and the air was hot and close. Not a sound came to his throbbing ears. With characteristic irrepressibility he began to swear softly, but articulately. Proof that his profanity was mild—one might say genteel—came in an instant. A gruff voice, startlingly near at hand, inter-

rupted him.

"Spit it out, young feller! Swear like a man, not like a damn' canary

bird."

Truxton tried hard to pierce the darkness, a strange thrill passing through his veins. The hidden speaker was unquestionably an American.

"What the devil does all this mean?" demanded the captive. "Where am I?"

"It means business, and you're here, that's where you are," was the sarcastic answer.

"Are you an American?"
"No. I'm a Chinaman."

"Oh, come off! Answer square."
"Well, I was born in Newport." As

an afterthought: "Kentucky."

"You're in a damned nice business, I'll say that for you," growled Truxton. "Who is responsible for this outrage?"

He heard the man yawn prodigiously. "Depends on what you call an outrage."

"This is the damnedest high-handed outrage I've ever—"

"Better save your breath, young feller. You won't have it very long, so save what you can of it."

Truxton was silent for a moment, analyzing this unique remark. "You mean, I am to stop breathing altogether?"

"Something like that."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know? Well, who does?"

"You'll find out when the boss gets good and ready."

"You are a fine American!"

"Look here, young feller, I've been polite to you, so don't get gay. I'll come over there and kick your jaw in."

"Come ahead. Anything to break

the monotony.'

"Didn't you get enough of the hangman's knot and the sandbag? Want more, eh? Well, if I wasn't so darned comfortable I'd come over there and give it to you. Now don't rile me!"

"I deserve to be kicked for being such a blithering fool as to get into this mess. Come on and kick me."

"You wanted to get a poke at the old man's eye, did ye? By thunder, that's like an American. Never satisfied to let things alone. See what it got you into?"

"The old man's eye? What old

man?"

"That's for you to find out, if you can. You've made a hell of a poor start at it."

"You're a good-natured scoundrel."
"Thanks, for them kind words."

"Well, what are you going to do with me? I don't like the air in here. It's awful. How long do I stay here?"

"Say, you're a gritty little man. I like your nerve. Too bad we ain't on the same side. I'll tell you this; you won't be here long. How would the old girl down there put it? You're going on a long voyage. That's it. But, first, we'll get out of this rat hole just as soon as them other guys come back from the cave. You'll get fresh air purty soon. Now, don't talk any more. I'm through gossipin'."

"How do you, an American, happen to be mixed up in a deal like this?"

"It's healthier work than makin' barrels at—I was goin' to say Sing Sing, but I hear they've changed the name. I prefer outdoor work."

"Fugitive, eh?"

"You might call it that. I'm wanted in seven States. The demand for me is great."

Truxton saw that he could get nothing out of the satirical rascal, so fell to speculating for himself. That he

was still in the loft above the hovel was more or less clear to him. His mind, now active, ran back to the final scene in the kitchen. The trapdoor in the ceiling, evidently a sliding arrangement, explained the mysterious disappearance of the owner of the eye; he had been whisked up through the aperture by confederates and the trapdoor closed before it could be discovered. The smoking kettle no longer puzzled him, now that he knew of the secret room above the kitchen; a skillfully concealed blowpipe could have produced the phenomenon. The space in which he was now lying, half suffocated, was doubtless a part of the cleverly designed excavation at the back of the hovel, the lower half being the kitchen, the upper an actual gateway to the open air somewhere in the mountainside.

That he had fallen into the hands of a band of conspirators was also quite clear to him. Whether they were brigands or more important operators against the crown, he was, of course,

in no position to decide.

It was enough that they expected to kill him, sooner or later. This, in itself, was sufficient to convince him that he was not to be held for ransom, but to be disposed of for reasons best

known to his captors.

Like a shot, the warning of Olga Platanova flashed into his brain. Here, then, was the proof that she actually knew of the peril he was in. But why should he be an object of concern to these men, whoever they were? His guard had mentioned "the old man." Good heavens, could he mean Spantz? The cold perspiration was standing on King's brow. Spantz! He recalled the wickedness in the armorer's face. But why should Spantz wish him evil? Again intuition, encouraged by memory, supplied him with a possible, even plausible, explanation.

The anarchists! The Reds! Olga was an avowed anarchist; she was almost a prisoner in the house of her uncle. Truxton's guard sat up suddenly and felt for his weapon when the captive let out a bitter oath of under-

standing and rage.

"By gad, they think I am a detective!" he added, light coming to him with a rush.

"What's that?" snapped the other. Truxton could almost feel the other's body grow tense despite the space between them. "Are you a detective? Are you? By God, if you are, I'll fin-

ish you up right here. You—"
"No! They're on the wrong scent. By Jove, the laugh's on old man

Spantz."

"Oho! So you do know what's up, then? Spantz, eh? Well, what you've guessed at or found out won't make much difference, my fine young feller. They've got you, and you'll be worse off than Danny Deever in the mornin'! Hello! Here they come. Now we'll get out of this infernal bake oven. Say, do you know, you've been cuddlin' up against a j'int of warm stovepipe for nearly an hour? Sh!"

The glimmer of a light came bobbing up from somewhere behind Truxton; he could see the flickering shadows on the wall. Two men crept into the room a moment later. One of them carried a lantern; the other turned King's body

over with his foot.

"You damned brute!" grated the cap-

"Call him what you like, young fel-" said his first acquaintance. "He ler," said his first acquaintance. can't understand a word you say. Well, do we pull out?" This to the man with the lantern.

The roof was so low that they were compelled to stoop in moving about. Truxton saw that the three ruffians were great, brutal-faced fellows, with bared arms that denoted toil as well

as spoils.

"Immediate!" said the lantern bearer. "Come; we drag him to the cave.
"Drag? Nix! We c'n carry him,
pard. I'm not for draggin' him down "Come; we drag him to the cave."

that passage. Grab hold there-you! Hey, get his feet, damn you!"

The third man was reluctant to understand, but at last grasped the prisoner by the feet, swearing in a language of his own. The Yankee desperado took his shoulders, and together, with earnest grunts, they followed the man with the lantern, Truxton knew not whither, except that it was away from the wretched sweat-

hole.

He could see that they were crowding through a low, narrow passage, the earthen sides of which reeked with moisture. Twice they paused to rest, resuming the journey after a season of cursing, finally depositing him with scant courtesy upon the rocky floor of what proved to be a rather commodious cave. The breath was almost jarred from his body. He had the satisfaction of driving his two heels viciously against the person of the man who had held them the last ten minutes, receiving a savage kick in return.

Daylight streamed into this convenient "hole in the wall." Lying upon his side, Truxton faced the opening that looked out upon the world. He saw nothing but blue sky. Near the opening, looking down as if into the valley below, stood the tall, gaunt figure of a man, thin-shouldered and stooped. His back was to the captive, but King observed that the three men, with two companions who sat at the back of the cave, never removed their gaze from the striking figure outlined against the

sky

Many minutes passed before the watcher turned slowly to take in the altered conditions behind him. King saw that he was old; gray-haired and cadaverous, with sharp, hawklike features. This, then, was the "old man," and he was not William Spantz. Unlike Spantz in every particular was this man, who eyed him so darkly, so coldly. Here was a high-born man, a man whose very manners bespoke for him years at court, a life spent in the upper world, not among the common people. Truxton found himself returning the stare with an interest that brought results.

"Your name is King, I believe," came from the thin lips of the old man. The tones were as metallic as the click of steel.

"Yes. May I inquire—

"No, you may not inquire. Put a gag in his mouth. I don't care to hear

anything from him. Gag him and cut the rope from his feet. He may walk from now on."

Three men sprang to do his bidding. King felt in that instant that he was looking for the first time upon the features of the Iron Count, Marlanx, the dishonored. He lay there helpless, speechless for many minutes, glancing at this cruel tyrant. Into his soul sank the conviction that no mercy would come from this man, this hater of all men; justice would play no part in the final, sickening tragedy. It was enough that Marlanx suspected him of being in the way; to be suspected was to be condemned. The whole hellish conspiracy flashed through his brain. He closed his eyes with the horror of it all.

Here was Marlanx on Graustark soil, conniving with cutthroats, commanding them without opposition. What could it mean, except a swift-growing menace to the crown—to the little prince?

Marlanx was speaking. Truxton looked up, as at an executioner. The lean, cruel face of that beautiful girl's husband was not far from his own; the fiery eyes were burning into his. The Iron Count sat upon a boulder

near his feet.

"So you are the Quixote who would tilt at invisible windmills, eh? I remember you quite well. We have met before. Perhaps you remember meeting my eye in Dame Babba's cabintwice, I think. You remember, I see. Ha, ha! You were very slow not to have caught such an old man. You were near to it the first time, butyou missed it, eh? I thought you might have seen my heels as I disappeared. I dare say you are wondering what I intend to do with you, now that I have you. Well, I am not the man to mince words. Mr. King, you are quite young, but the good die young. I am very old, you observe. I will not say that you are to die to-night or to-morrow or any day, for I do not know. I am going to send you to a court. Not an ordinary court, Mr. King, but one of extreme perspicacity. I fancy you will die before long. We can spare you. I do not approve of meddlers. It seems

to be quite settled that you are a police agent. Be that as it may, I imagine our little court of last resort will take no chances, one way or the other. A man or two, more or less, will not be counted a year from now."

The steady, cruel eyes fascinated King. He knew that he was in desperate straits, that he had one chance in a million to escape, and yet he found himself held by the spell of those eyes, drinking in certain metallic monotonies

as if hypnotized.

"I am glad you called again at my temporary abode, Mr. King. Americans are always welcome; the sooner they come, the sooner it's over. It may interest you to know that I am very partial to Americans. Were I a cannibal, I could eat them with relish. If I had my way, all Americans should be in heaven. The earth surely is not good enough or big enough for them, and hell is already overcrowded. Yes,' reflectively pressing his nose with a bony forefinger, "I love the Americans dearly. I should enjoy a similar visit from Mr. John Tullis. Although, I may say, he seems to be choosing another way of testing my hospitality. I expect him to visit me in my humble castle before many days. I should like to have him remain there until his dying day.

There was a deep significance in his smile. King shuddered. His gaze followed the gaunt, spidery old man as he returned to the opening for another long survey of the valley below. Night was falling; the sky was growing darker, and the wind was rising. Marlanx's sharp features were not so distinguishable when he returned to the boulder. The men in the cave had not spoken except in whispers. They appeared to be living in abject fear of this grim

old nobleman.

"Night is coming. I must say farewell, my bold young friend. My way lies to the north. This is merely a land of promise to me. You go southward, to the city of Edelweiss. not through the gates; oh, no! There are other ways, as you will find. If you should, by any chance, escape the

jurisdiction of the court I am sending you to, I sincerely trust you may honor me with another visit here. I come often to the hovel in the glen. It is the only friendly house I know of in all Graustark. Some day I may be able to recompense its beauteous mistress, My good friends, Dangloss and Halfont and Braze-and Tullis, whom I know only by reputation-are, as yet, unaware of my glorious return to Graustark, else they would honor me with distinguished presence. Some day I may invite them to dine with me. I shall enjoy seeing them eat of the humble pie I can put before them. Good-by, my brave Sir Galahad; I may never see you again."

With a courtly bow he turned from the tense-muscled captive, and directed his final instructions to the men. "Take him at once to the city, but be on your guard. A single false move now means utter ruin for all of us. Our affairs go so well at present that we cannot afford to offend Dame Fortune. She smiles on us, my men. Take this fool to the house on the monastery road. There you will turn him over to the others. It is for them to drag the truth from his lips. I'd suggest, dear Mr. King, that you tell them all you know before they begin the dragging process. It is a very unpleasant way

they have."

With a curt nod to the men, he strode out through the mouth of the cave, and was gone. Dusk had settled down upon mountain and valley; a thin fog swam high in the air above. One of the men cut the rope that bound Truxton's

"Get up," said the Newport man. "We've got to be movin'. How'd you like the old man? Smart bug, ain't he? Say, he'll throw the hooks into them guys down in Edelweiss so hard one of these days that they won't come out till they rot out."

Still gagged and somewhat dizzy, King was hurried off into the narrow mountain path, closely surrounded by

the five men.

"They tell me your friend, the Cook guy, got plugged down in the gap when he tried to duck this afternoon," volunteered the Yankee unconcernedly.

Hobbs shot? King's eyes suddenly filled with tears, a great wave of pity and shame rushing to his heart. Poor Hobbs! He had led him into this; to gratify a vainglorious whim, he had done the little Englishman to death.

The silent, cautious march down the valley, through the gap, and along the ridge carried them far into the night. King knew that they were skirting the main roads, keeping to the almost hidden trails of the mountaineers. They carried no light, nor did they speak to each other except in hoarse whispers. In single file, they made their way, the prisoner between them, weary, footsore, and now desperate in the full realization of his position. Being gagged, he could make no appeal to the one man who might befriend him-his villainous countryman. It occurred to him-grim thought-that the astute Marlanx had considered that very probability, and had made it impossible for him to resort to the cupidity of the hireling.

At last, when he could scarcely drag his feet after him, they came to a halt. A consultation followed, but he could not understand a word. This much he knew; they were in the hills directly above the northern gates. Two of the men went forward, moving with extreme caution. In half an hour they returned, and the march was resumed.

Their next halt came sooner than he expected. The vague, black shadow of a lightless house loomed up before In a twinkling, he was hustled across the road and into a door. Then down a flight of stairs, through pitchy darkness, guided by two of the men, a whispered word of advice now and then from the Yankee saving him from perilous stumbles. He was jerked up sharply with a command to stand still. A light flashed suddenly in his face, blinding him for the moment. Voices in eager, quick conversation came to his ears long before his eyes could take in the situation.

Soon he saw that they were in a broad, bare cellar; three men in heavy

black beards were in earnest conversation with several of his captors; all

were gesticulating fiercely.

His Newport companion enlightened him, between puffs of the pipe he was struggling with. "Here's where we say good-by, young feller. We turn you over to these gents, whoever they are. I'm sort of out of it when they get to jabberin' among themselves. I can understand 'em when they talk slow, but, say, did you ever hear a flock of Union Square sparrows chirp faster than them fellers is talkin' now? You go into the village with these Schwabs, by the sewer line, I guess." Truxton pricked up his ears. The old man has had a hole chopped in the sewer here, they tell me, and it's a snap to get into the city. Not very clean or neat, but it gets you there. Well, so-long! They're ready, I see. They don't monkey long when they've got a thing to do. I'd advise you not to be too stubborn when they get you to headquarters; it may go easier with you. I'm not so damned bad, young feller. It's just the business I'm inand the company.

King felt a thrill of real regard for the rascal. He nodded his thanks, and tried to smile. The fellow grinned and slapped him on the shoulder, unobserved by the others. In another moment, his guardianship was transferred; he was being hurried across the cellar toward an open doorway. Down a few stone steps he was led by the bearded crew, and then pushed through a hole in what appeared to be a heavy brick wall. He realized at once where he was. The gurgle of running water, the odor of foul airs came up to him. It was the great sewer that ran from the hills through the heart of the city, flushed continuously by a diverted mountain stream that swept down from

above.

He was wading in cold water, over a slippery bottom, tightly held by two men, the third going ahead with the lantern. Always ahead loomed the black, opaque circle which never came nearer, never grew smaller. It was the ever receding wall of darkness. At last, the strange journey ended. They came to a niche in the slimy wall. Up into this the men climbed, dragging him after them. The man above was cautiously tapping on what appeared to be solid masonry. To King's surprise, a section of the wall suddenly opened before them. He was seized from above by strong hands, and literally jerked through the hole, his companions following. Up narrow steps, through a sour-smelling passage, and—then, into a long, dimly lighted room, in the centre of which stood a long table.

He was not permitted to linger here for long, but passed on into a small room adjoining. Some one, speaking in English, told him to sit down. The gag was removed from his stiff, in-

flamed mouth.

"Fetch him some water," said a voice that he was sure he recognized —a high, querulous voice.

"Hello, Spantz," articulated Truxton, turning to the black-bearded, bent figure,

There was an instant of silence. Then Spantz spoke, with a soft laugh: "You will not know so much to-morrow, Herr King. Give him the water, man. He has much to say to us, and he cannot talk with a dry throat."

"Nor an empty stomach," added King. He drank long of the pitcher that was held to his lips.

"This is not the Regengetz," growled a surly voice.

a surry voice.

"You mean, I don't eat?"
"Enough," cried Spantz. "Bring him out here. The others have come."

King was pushed out into the larger room, where he was confronted by a crowd of bewhiskered men and snakyeyed women with most intellectual nose glasses.

For nearly an hour he was probed with questions concerning his business in Edelweiss. Threats followed close upon his unsatisfactory answers, though they were absolutely truthful. There was no attempt made to disguise the fact that they were conspiring against the government; in fact, they were

rather more open than secretive. When he thought of it afterward, a chill crept over him. They would not have spoken so openly before him if they entertained the slightest fear that he would ever be in a position to expose them.

"We'll find a way to make you talk to-morrow, my friend. Starving is not

pleasant."

"You would not starve me?" he cried.
"No. You will have the pleasure of starving yourself," said a thin-eyed fellow whom he afterward knew as Peter Brutus.

He was thrown back into the little room. To his surprise and gratification, the bonds on his wrists were removed. Afterward he was to know that there was method in this action of his jailers; his own utter impotency was to be made more galling to him by the maddening knowledge that he possessed hands and feet and lungs—and

could not use them!

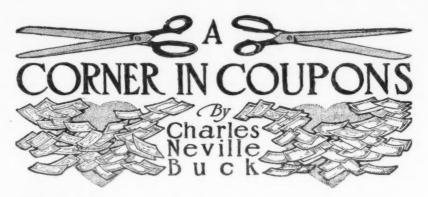
He found a match in his box, and struck it. There was no article of furniture. The floor was bare, the walls green with age. He had a feeling that there would be rats; perhaps lizards. A search revealed the fact that his purse, his watch, and his pocketknife were missing. Another precious match showed him that there were no windows. A chimney hole in the ceiling was, perhaps, the only means by which fresh air could reach this dreary place.

"Well, I guess I'm here to stay," he said to himself. He sat down with his back to the wall, despair in his soul. A pitiful, weak smile came to him in the darkness, as he thought of the result of his endeavor to "show off" for the benefit of the heartless girl in rajah silk. "What an ass I am," he groaned. "Now she will never know."

Sleep was claiming his senses. He made a pillow of his coat, commended himself to the charity of rats and other horrors, and stretched his weary bones upon the relentless floor.

"No one will ever know," he murmured, his last waking thought being

of a dear one at home.





HE fact that the girl who sat in the deep veranda chair, impatiently tapping, with her crop, the ridiculously small toe of her riding boot, presented a picture utterly ador-

able, and that her palpable impatience was by way of compliment to himself, only made the situation the more poignant.

He paused a moment at the door as he came out of the house, but it is doubtful whether the eyes under his sulkily gathered brows took in any of the extraordinary beauty with which Director October had set the stage of Nature out across the countryside. His face at least was out of key, for it was set in the mask of tragedy as uncompromising as the black visage used to typify the darker phases in the Greek drama.

"Pleasant week's end, this, to which you have invited me!" he commented as he came forward, kicking his spurred heels into the grass rug with greater emphasis than was necessary. "Hospitality delightful, paternal cordiality above par, food epicurean. Everything provided for the comfort of animal man. If there were only animal man in me I should be extremely happy!"

The fox terrier he had given her stood before him with an expression on its face as near a smile of propitiating appeal as canine features may attain. The expression was corroborated by a blandly waving tail-stump.

Woodson kicked the terrier by way of affording escapement for the mental safety valve. Under normal conditions such treasonable conduct would have precipitated instant hostilities. Now, however, the girl smiled vaguely off over the pastures, and Woodson felt uneasily that in her ignoring of the indignity lay a hint of the ominous.

"What has papa done to you?" she inquired, with a shade too much art in her artlessness. "Did he give you a bad cigar, or is it just that you don't like his looks?"

"I've grown used to his looks. Besides, his personal appearance is above reproach. In fact, he rather resembles you, though of course he couldn't fight at your weight and be strong."

His scowl softened. An expression of worship warred with its sternness, while his eyes refreshed themselves with the willowy slenderness of the figure in the riding habit.

"Then it must be the cigar," she suggested, with tantalizing demureness.

"Cigars are all right. Much better than most cigars one gets at country houses. He can call on me for a reference as to his cigars. I admitted that he understood catering to the animal

The girl shrugged her shoulders, attractive shoulders such as a slim Diana might have gloriously worn. She fondled the terrier's silky ear.

"Then I give it up," she said. With a sudden violet sparkle of mischief in her eyes, which was instantly quenched, she added: "Oh, you dear boy, you are angry, in sympathy with me, because papa vetoed my trip to the Orient with the Van Sants. And that poetic George Van Sant was to have been in the party. Think of having George Van Sant compose odes to one by moonlight at the Pyramids!"

The man ground his teeth.

"It was no such thing," he declared with promptness. "Not by a day's journey in a racing car. I could almost love your father for that"-this fer-vently. "I shall jot that down as a palliating circumstance. Where is that

dog? I want to kick him again!"
"Don't you think," she inquired a shade frostily, "that there is such a thing as overindulgence, even in kick-

ing dogs?"
"If," he responded from the deep abyss of his gloom, "if nature had not made it so inconvenient, I could find more solace in kicking myself." There was a protracted silence. At last the girl spoke.

"If I were to be very sweet to you," she suggested tentatively, "would it compensate for papa's mysterious cruel-

"Is that question direct, or hypothetical?" demanded the man.

She ignored the interrogation and replied with another.

"What did he do, or what didn't he

"Both, in abundance."

"And yet I fancied," she mused, her eyes on the Indian summer horizon, "that you two were having a lovely session in the library. You made it so protracted. I had begun to regret that I had saved the afternoon for you-exclusively."

"You should have been agonizing in sympathy with me," he sternly assured her. "I was undergoing the very latest style of twentieth-century inquisition. Psychological thumbscrews, mental bone crushers! It beggars description. Did you know," he added in an awed whisper, "that the major keeps a chamber of horrors in there?" His thumb jerked vindictively toward the library

"What was it all about?"

"About you."

"Oh!" wickedly. "That explains it. But why didn't you change the subject?"

"Well," with a deep sigh of melancholy, "my future is a withered thing."
"Ned!" There was now a trace of

anxiety in the voice that banished the note of teasing. "What did papa say?"

"I'm not sure I can repeat it verbatim, but I think I caught the general drift and substance. Oh, he did it very nicely. Very nicely indeed! One might infer that he had studied the art of turning down his daughter's suitors in the Red Cross service. It was civilized and merciful."

The girl sat upright, and her voice was insistent and commanding.

"What did he say?"

"He said he liked me." Woodson's voice had acquired the perfection of irony. "You can't imagine how that solaced me, but he regretted to report —that style, you know. He started out like a Russian general in Manchuria breaking it gently to the czar.

"Continuing, he said he had seldom known a young man who pleased him more thoroughly, and that if he could afford to pick out a son-in-law regardless of expense, I would be his unanimous choice. In fact, it hurt him sorely to reflect that he couldn't indulge himself in such a luxury, that I ought not really to tempt him beyond his power to resist. But the town and country houses, the horses, the automobiles, the yacht, and above all an expensive and extravagant daughter-" The man paused with a severe expression. "These things so taxed his small resourcesyou see, the poor old gentleman has only as many millions as I could count on the fingers of both hands-that he couldn't be too self-indulgent, and must deny himself. Economy must start somewhere, and he decided, much against his inclination, to start with me."

"Ned, do be serious. I should think

you might appreciate the fact that I want to know the truth. I am in this,

"Serious!" The man looked at her large eyed. "Serious! God wot, my dear girl, there is nothing fanciful about this narrative. It is not only serious, it is utterly solemn. It is awesome! If this is not serious, then 'Hamlet' is musical comedy."

He paused for a moment in order to allow her to assimilate fully the gentle

force of his rebuke.

"After alluding again to your extravagance"—he spoke accusingly—"he handed me this cigar." The man tossed the cigar as far out onto the lawn as possible, with a gesture of viciousness.

"Then he catechised me on my monetary standing, and convicted me of the misdemeanor of poverty. I told him I had twenty thousand dollars, though I admitted that that was accidental. I wouldn't have had it if my uncle had not died too hastily to make a will. Also, I assured him that my flourishing young law practice, though just now an infant industry, would doubtless, under the nurturing of my sterling worth and energy, multiply and replenish the purse.

"Your father was not impressed. He said that, had I demonstrated the proper initiative, I would have added a couple of ciphers to that figure by this good day. I might have told him that I could add any number of ciphers, but only at the front end. He confided to me that at my age he had rounded up tons of money. It wasn't the money he cared about, so he assured me, but the indicated ability to support you in all the artificiality to which you are accustomed and to buy you a lot of things you don't want. No, the last is an embellishment of my own. I believe he termed them necessities.'

"But I don't want those things!" protested the young woman in question.

"That makes no difference. You've got to have them. It's the paternal edict. Then at the end of the interview, he made a great concession; almost held out a hope, but not quite."

"What was that?" eagerly.

"He said when I multiplied my twenty thousand by ten he would withdraw all objections. He said it was not as though the money were not in circulation and available. It was, he declared, and taking it away from people who have it, he had discovered, was a very easy matter. Now, all I had to do was to go out and get it. If I could take it away from himself he would have no complaint to make, but he wanted to see me qualify. Just as soon as I can become a triumphant robber baron I am permitted to come back and claim you-unless some other robber baron shows up first."

"If you are so apprehensive of that" —the girl rose and turned her back on 'you needn't trouble about com-

ing back."

The man was at her side, repentant,

in a moment,

"I didn't mean you, dear," he protested, his hand finding the one that held the crop. "I guess I'm not just responsible.

She turned toward him again, smil-

"What happened, then?"

"I adjourned the meeting. I told him I had an appointment to go riding with you. The novelty had begun to rub off of papa's society.

Her eyes were pensive, and she stood with the mellow autumn sun on her hair and cheeks in an attitude of deep

thought.

Suddenly she wheeled, and the eyes brightened with a flash of inspiration. "Eureka!" she exclaimed. "I have

solved it!"

The man bent forward, incredulous,

yet taking sudden heart.

"Why not take papa at his word? Take the two hundred thousand away from him. Then he can't object. will be like hoisting him with his own petard.'

The man wilted with a groan. With a swift bargain-counter calculation, she

added:

"You don't have to take two hundred thousand. You already have a part of it. You only need a hundred and eighty thousand dollars!"

For a few moments he contemplated the charmingly puckered brow with pity, then sensing the full humor of the proposition, a broad grin spread

across his face.

"Yes, that will be very nice," he assented. "Very nice, indeed. The only wonder is that some one else has not already thought of stripping him of his wealth. It does not seem to have oc-curred to any one. They all left him for me."

After a moment's pause, he shook his

"Upon consideration," he said, "I can't do it. I could never be able to bring myself to the point of such discourtesy. It would be almost presumptuous for an able-bodied young attorney to take such mean advantage of a guileless old capitalist who, through decades, has done nothing more strenuous than to gather in money, and who can't hold to it any harder than a bulldog can to a bone. No, I believe, after all, I'd rather turn kleptomaniac and steal the British Museum.

She tossed her head a little. "You can do precisely as you like," she said. "I understand perfectly the magnitude of the task, but I paid you the compliment to think you capable of it."

He looked at her for a moment, and

his face set with purpose.
"Thank you," he said. "I'll try." "Besides"-she laid her hand lightly on his arm-"besides, there are two other things that you seem to overlook entirely. I should think you would not utterly despair as long as you had them to think about.'

"Have I overlooked some assets?" he asked in a voice of astonishment.

"In the first place, you have your practice. That will bring lots of money. You are that kind of a lawyer."

His smile returned.

"Certainly," he replied. "You know that, and I know it. All that now remains is to educate some clients, judges, and juries to a comprehensive understanding of the fact. It is a mere detail, yet it may take several moments to accomplish."

She ignored the answer.

"And secondly-" She halted suddenly, and half turned away, her color heightening.

"And secondly?" he prompted her,

leaning eagerly forward.

She wheeled, and caught him by both

"Secondly," she said, "I intend to marry you anyway."

She drew back and fell to gazing abstractedly out at the landscape as a groom appeared leading their horses from the stables. The man made reparation to the fox terrier, who, possessing a nature of sweet forgiveness, jumped wildly and joyously against his boots and riding breeches as he went with the girl down the stairs and lifted her to the saddle.

When he vaulted lightly to his own mount and gathered up the reins, he left his depression on the ground. After all, the air was fragrant and the woods were russet and scarlet, and the squirrels chattered happily, and all things seemed possible, and every one knows that Love has never surrendered his prerogative of working miracles.

"Do you believe in heredity?" asked

the girl.

"I believe in the survival of the fittest, transmigration of souls, and brotherhood of man; in short, I believe in everything that's hopeful and optimistic," he declared happily. "Above all, I believe that you are unspeakably adorable and wonderful. No," he amended hastily, "I don't believe that. I know it.

"That's not answering my question.

Do you believe in heredity?

"I guess so," vaguely.

"I wonder if I inherit any of papa's financial ability.

"What's the idea?" he asked, puz-

zled. "What's the answer?"
"Nothing," she parried. "Nothing
yet. But I believe I have an idea."

Several days later, in town, Woodson sat in the lounging room of his club. His reflections were bitter. Somehow with the Indian summer glory faded to sullen skies, with withered leaves blowing down from branches that were beginning to be bare and eddying along the city pavement outside, without the intoxication of her presence, life did not wear so hopeful a face. The power of Cupid to cope with and overcome Capital behind his shields of gold seemed more visionary than probable. Love, he remembered, is blind, and Capital has a far vision and is wide awake. The click of billiard balls from across the hall annoyed him, and the color of McAfee's new French car at the curb offended his eye.

He felt a heavy hand on his shoulder and turned to see the well-groomed figure of Major Halliard, his unresponsive candidate for father-in-law, drawing off

his gloves at his side.

"Well, well, my boy, how goes it?" demanded the gentleman genially. "Have you subjugated the world of finance yet? Are you prepared to 'hang round Clusium's altars the golden shields of Rome'?"

"The nearest I could come to it, would be to hang round Clusium's altars; and probably to get locked up for vagrancy," growled the younger man

vagrancy," growled the younger man.
"Tut, tut!" retorted the captain of industry. "You are at that enviable age which mistakes hunger for disas-ter. Come and lunch with me. It gives one indigestion to eat alone. We can act as mutual digestives for each other."

Woodson rose and stretched himself. "Medicinally, as otherwise," he declared, "I am yours to command."

Across the tablecloth the face of Major Halliard showed as broad and benign as a harvest moon. The major

nign as a harvest moon. The n

"Since you are an aspirant for wealth," he began, setting down his empty cocktail glass and reaching for his soupspoon, as a man who goes unerringly and unhesitatingly from undertaking to undertaking, "I will give
you a tip. The soul of wealth is advertising. If you have something that
you want people to buy, spread the announcement of its virtues across the
face of the earth. Let its name and
merits become household words!"

Woodson thought of divers large

signboards depicting sacks of Major Halliard's "Dulcet Brand Sugar" rising from the green fields along the railroad tracks, intruding themselves into sylvan vistas, perching among the greenery of cliffsides, and generally torturing the eye. He shuddered.

"I have just devised a scheme that will pay me handsomely," went on the elder clubman. "I rarely talk business at table, but I am full of this idea. You see, when one has all the money he requires, and yet finds it impossible to break business ties, he must devise new things to do. Believe me, dear boy, the financial appetite is easily jaded."

"Possibly," assented Woodson politely but dubiously. "Personally, I can't say. My financial appetite has not yet reached that point. It is ravenous rather than in need of appetizers."

But the major was absorbed in his

latest strategy.

"I have just inserted an advertisement in a local paper," he announced, "which I regard as unique. To say that is to say it is profitable." "Indeed!" The young man was find-

"Indeed!" The young man was finding it difficult to simulate interest, yet was struggling manfully to full realization of the necessity of propitiating

this raconteur.

"The idea is this." The major reached for the tabasco, and paused as he measuredly dropped it into his soup. "In this paper, for the space of several days, I use a large advertising space. In each ad is a coupon entitling the reader to a full-sized package of Halliard's Dulcet Brand Table Sugar. Each sack costs me six cents, and the consumer gets it for nothing. Result, the reader proceeds ever after to use that sugar."

"Suppose," suggested Woodson, with an interest something less than languid, "the reader proceeds to use up

all you have-for nothing."

"Ah!" The capitalist smiled even more benignly. "There speaks the lawyer. That was the point I anticipated your making. That is the point where this plan becomes clever. You see, each coupon must be presented by the reader in person at one of our city distributing houses, or at the main point. Do you follow me?"

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Woodson was wondering what one girl was doing just then, and whether she liked the orchids he had sent that morning. Perhaps they were too purple—she preferred the more delicate colors.

"Oh, yes," he replied, recalling himself to the present. "I quite understand."

"Now," proclaimed the major triumphantly, "now comes the point. I have selected the Star for my advertising medium. The Star is the Republican organ not only for the State but for this section. Its total guaranteed circulation is enormous. Usually we select an advertising medium that reaches a large number of people, but I have chosen the paper in this case because it has practically a dummy circulation in town. Do you see?"

Woodson nodded. "Because of that fact and because out-of-town people can't bring in their coupons, we actually give away very little, but we send the sacks to all out-oftowners for twelve cents a sack, making a profit of several cents, and we get the advertising advantage without the cost of what seems to be a very generous and expensive offer. We shall probably give away two thousand dollars' worth of the commodity. The ad costs a thousand more, and we have a threethousand-dollar investment that pays several hundred per cent. I regard that as a proposition showing some business perspicacity! Of course, it is only the start of a national advertising campaign; but it is a test."

A servant bent over Woodson. "You are wanted at the phone, sir," he announced.

"Certainly, certainly," murmured the major, in answer to the younger man's apology, as he withdrew.

In the telephone booth Woodson took up the receiver and at once his eyes lighted with much greater interest than the financial magnate's private tip had brought to them.

"Yes-yes," he said eagerly, "of course I know who it is. There isn't

any other voice like it. I'd know it if I heard it in the midst of the music of the spheres."

There were a few moments of listening, his head nodding as though the girl on the wire could see him.

"What's that? You have discovered the way? You have evolved a method? When will you tell me? Must see me at once? Important, you say? Of course, it's important. It's seeing you, isn't it? You're coming downtown? Good! I'll meet you there in twenty minutes. Oh, by the way, I've been lunching with your father. Yes, he's been telling me about some unconscionable advertising scheme. No, I don't understand it. It's some characteristic scheme to get more money away from the people without the use of anæsthetics. I beg your pardon. Of course I didn't mean to be disrespectful. You see, I've come to regard him as a human being to be deprived of money. You say that's what you want to talk about? Well, I'll be there. Good-by. Oh, I say! Hello! Hello! Hello! Central, central, why did you cut me off? You didn't? Oh, she rang off? All right!" He hung up the receiver

and returned to the dining room.

"Major," he said, "you must excuse
me. I've just had a telephone message
that takes me away. Yes, a matter of
business, and of great importance."

"Well, run along, but this salad is excellent. You have my sympathy. And whenever you find yourself in possession of the golden shields of Rome, look me up."

"Sure, I'll bring them around as soon as they arrive." Woodson was on his way to the coat room.

An hour later he handed the girl into her limousine. She was saying something

"Yes," he agreed, "they do look well. They have greatly improved in appearance, since I saw them at the florist's. Do you know," he added irrelevantly, with a smile, "I believe not only in heredity, but also in environment. These orchids prove it."

The girl smiled, but as she gave him her hand it trembled a little.

"If this thing turns out badly!" she

faltered.

"It's not going to turn out badly," he assured her, but as the motor car drew away from the curb and he settled his hat back on his head, he added to himself: "At least, I hope not! This is either Austerlitz or Waterloo for

Another hour was devoted to conning "employment wanted" columns of the afternoon papers and to communicating by telephone and messengers with applicants for clerical work. After that Woodson strolled into the rear office of the Star's business department and asked for the business manager.

"That was a good cartoon you had in to-day's paper," he remarked in the most casual manner. "And the editorial was even better. You people are doing

good work this campaign.

"I think, myself, we are delivering the goods." The business manager spoke with some complacency. "The art and editorial staffs are turning out good stuff, and we are not sparing expense." Then, feeling that one good compliment deserved another, he inquired: "Are you going to take the stump this year, Mr. Woodson, or only serve the party in an advisory capacity?"
"I can't say yet," responded the law-

yer. Then coming to the point, he explained. "I have a business proposition of an unusual sort to put up to you." He puffed abstractedly at his cigar, while the chief of the business depart-

ment waited with expectancy.

"I want to know if you people can, in the next three days, furnish me with three million eight hundred and eighty thousand copies of the Star? shall want one-third of that number of each day's issue." The business manager stood speechless in amazement.

"By the way," added Woodson in a matter-of-fact voice, "I presume that we may rely on this able political mat-ter continuing each day? Of course it's useless to disseminate weak literature.'

"Three million papers—nearly four million papers in three days—did I understand you rightly? Do you realize

that there isn't a newspaper in the world that has a daily circulation of one million?"

"That's what I want. There are sixteen million voters in the United States, you know." Woodson spoke cheerfully.

Before the eyes of the business manager opened vistas of great possibility. Visions of becoming a national political organ dazzled his senses.

The-the proposition is a little unusual," he stammered. "I must figure

"I should expect newsboy rateshalf a cent a copy," stipulated Wood-

"There would be no dispute on that score. Let me see, that would come to —" He began multiplying on the back of an envelope.

"It will come to exactly nineteen thousand four hundred dollars," said

Woodson.

"It will tax our presses somewhat, but we want to help the party, and it's a big thing. If you will pardon me a moment I will speak to the chief.'

In the upper sanctum the two held a

confidential debate.

"Have we been running a sworn statement as to circulation of late?" demanded the proprietor.

'No.

"Well, do so for the next three days. Don't claim the number of copies actually sold to be what they are. No one would believe that. Make it, say, onefourth the actual number, then at the end of two weeks make a sworn statement of the average number per day sold in that time. Understand?

Then the chief and the business manager returned together to the office where Woodson had been left,

"Mr. Woodson," said the latter, "it has just occurred to me that we are running a rather unusual sort of ad for Halliard & Co. A coupon proposition. I will ask you one question. Do you represent any rival sugar company?"
"I do not," responded the attorney

promptly.

"We have not guaranteed any protection of any sort," continued the manager, "still, we don't wish to swamp a large advertiser. I will ask one other question. Are many of these papers to be turned loose on the streets? Locally, I mean?"

Woodson yawned.

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"I don't wish to assume any responsibility for your advertisers, and I am not at liberty just now to state how these papers are to be used," he said. "You can take my offer or leave it."

"I don't know that we should make a point of that," said the business manager. "vet---"

ager, "yet-

"I simply want to clear my own skirts," said Woodson. "However, I will state, if it will be of service, that practically none of these papers will go out at large in the city. For my purpose the papers will have to be clipped, and I am willing, although it will involve heavy clerical labor, to cut the coupon out of every paper I use."

"That is most eminently satisfactory" declared the chief in a gratified voice. The business manager nodded

his concurrence.

"There is still one point," suggested the latter. "As I said before, this contract will tax our presses, added as it must be to our usual output. It may be midnight of each day before we can deliver the last of the day's supply. We shall have to run day and night.

The lawyer reflected a moment. "I hardly think that will make any

material difference."

There was some further discussion of When the unusual customer

had gone the chief smiled.

"I foresee agents of the opposition press trotting in here to investigate our claims as to circulation," he said. "Have our books opened to them, and

extend them every courtesy."
In improvised headquarters in an office building Woodson, shirt-sleeved and perspiring, spent three days and three nights superintending the activities of a large staff of clerks, employed at fancy salaries, as they clipped, counted, and bound coupons from huge bundles of damp papers into packets of one hundred each.

He had been fortunate in turning all

his securities into cash at a small sacri-

When on the fourth day he walked into the mahogany-furnished office of the capitalist, at the Dulcet Sugar Mills, the major rose affably to receive him. He had been ushered into the great man's sanctum without delay. The major, who had seen much of him at his home, felt a certain curiosity to know what could cause a call during business hours.

"This is an unwonted pleasure," declared the host, tendering a cigar box which bore the import stamp.

"I came, major," announced the attorney in his most official tones, "on

business.'

"Ah!" The older man raised his brows and settled himself back comfortably in his swivel chair, polishing his glasses as a half-quizzical expression came into his face. "Business. That is good! Do you come to 'hang round Clusium's altars the golden shields of Rome'?"

Woodson in turn raised his brows, then he sagely studied the tip of his cigar as though it were the fire of the

oracle.

"That's it—approximately," he as-nted in a prosaic tone. "Only the sented in a prosaic tone. "Only the golden shields are here and I have come to move them away.

"I am afraid I don't quite follow."

"Just now," explained Woodson, "it is enough for you to understand clearly that I should like you to redeem for me three million eight hundred and eighty thousand coupons in sugar, or its equivalent in money."

The major's cigar dropped from his fat fingers. He gazed commiseratingly at his visitor while his own lips re-

mained parted.

"You are burning a hole in your trousers, sir," suggested the young man as the unheeded cigar lay on the other's stout leg. The older man hastily brushed away the hot ashes. His eyes never moved from the pleasant, de-mented face of the man who had wanted to adopt him as father-in-law and who was now insane!

"What-did-you-say?" he finally

demanded incredulously.

"I answered your advertisement," elucidated Woodson in the sweetest possible manner. "I clipped coupons. I clipped three million eight hundred and eighty thousand of them. Now I want all that sugar. 'Dulcet Brand Table Sugar. The incomparable sweetener. The sugar that is really sweet." Woodson was reading from a five-byfour-inch newspaper clipping which he held in his hand. It was one of the coupons. He started to refold the slip, when, as though his attention had been challenged, he held it up again.

"'Consent to accept no substitute," he read, with elocutionary effect, "'demand Dulcet Brand. All good dealers have it.' You are a good dealer, aren't you, major?" he asked, with inno-

cence as of a little child.

The major rose, his face purple and

apoplectic.

"There is a certain brand of grotesquerie that is exceedingly unpleasant," he announced. "Where did they give you your degree at law, young man?"

The millionaire had come over and stood before the chair from which the would-be son-in-law looked up calmly.

'Harvard, sir.'

"Didn't they teach you there," roared the major, "to read a document before you commence action on it? Read that coupon. Not in part, not garbling. But from A to Izzard, from alpha toto-" The major coughed chokingly.

"To omega, sir," prompted Woodson. Then he unfolded the slip and read it to the major as he might have cited an authority to a supreme justice.

"And now summing up," he com-mented pleasantly as he looked over his glasses to note that the major had dropped into an easy-chair, his face livid, his fingers limp. "Summing up, I will call your attention to the fact that this coupon simply entitles the holder to one sample sack, equivalent to the ordinary twelve-cent size. There is no condition or limitation. There is no qualifying clause. Whether my three million eight hundred and eighty thousand coupons entitle me to three million eight hundred and eighty thousand sacks is, I take it, a simple calculation in mental arithmetic.'

"Let me see that damned slip," com-

manded the major.

Woodson handed it to him.

"I know, major," he anticipated, "I know what you are about to say. There was to have been a protecting clause. Probably one stipulating that only one coupon should be honored for each person, or some similar restriction. You will notice that it is not there.

"But why in hell isn't it there?" demanded the major, with violence. "I instructed that it be there."

Woodson spread his hands.

"'Not but they knew that some one had blundered," he quoted.

Suddenly Major Halliard rose and began pacing the floor.

"Go on, go on!" he growled. "Recite some more poetry. It gives me time to think." Woodson fell silent.

The major was not a man who gave up a battle with the first reverse. His experience had been one in which many defeats had been converted into victories at the point of the bayonet.

Now he halted before Woodson, his wrath dying into a sort of grin.

"How many of 'em did you say you "Oh, not quite four million. Count

'em, count 'em!" invited the other. The smile on the major's face broad-

"Do you know, young imbecile at law," he began, with much sudden calmness, "that that damned sheet doesn't print that many papers in six months? It couldn't sell them. There is such a thing as supply and demand. You should have figured on that. Didn't I tell you I picked that paper out because of its dummy circulation? Now, my fond, foolish, juvenile thing, you are trying to rake in a big pot with a pair of measly deuces. And by the gods, I'll just call you. Show your hand."

"Čertainly, major." Woodson rose and started toward the window. Half way over he halted. "Before the show down," he explained, "I may say that you did not discover the law of supply and demand. It was known previously. I created the demand by ordering those papers and the management was kind enough to print them for me." The major rose and stood snorting once more.

"Now you ask what I hold," added Woodson. "I ask in turn what you hold against my hand. I have about four million of a kind."
"You are bluffing," insisted the

"You are bluffing," insisted the wrathful major. "You've got to show me."

"Why, certainly. That's business. Count 'em; count 'em!"

"Where the hell are they? I suppose you have them in your vest pocket. Or perhaps you'll wave a wand and carry your legerdemain so far as to draw them out of my neck, with a couple of white rabbits thrown in for luck."

Woodson took the older man by the elbow and led him to the window.

"That's them," he ungrammatically enlightened.

"Where are your miserable tags?"
"Those three moving vans," explained Woodson. Then he waved his arm in signal and a procession of overall-clad piano movers began stumbling in under heavy burdens, like stevedores unloading a freight steamer.

Major Halliard sat at his desk and figured for a time. "Do you know that those things would cost me—mind I say would cost, not will cost me—two hundred and thirty-two thousand dollars to redeem?" he demanded.

"In arithmetic at least we agree perfectly," affirmed the lawyer. "They cost me less than twenty thousand dollars. Rather a fairish sort of investment, don't you think?"

No answer.

"Now, major," continued Woodson, with a sudden note of magnanimity in his voice, "I am, after all, only an amateur buccaneer of finance. I have not acquired the necessary callousness to be a professional. I can't make you walk the plank without mercy. I can't get a man groggy and hanging to the ropes and then wallop him. Just sign your

check for two hundred thousand dollars and keep the change. We will discuss the rest of our affairs outside of business hours."

The older man's face twitched. Whether it was in wrath or amusement it would be impossible to say. He came over to Woodson and surveyed him from head to foot,

"Young man," he announced, with the solemnity of a jury foreman returning a death verdict, "you are the most unparalleled, unprecedented, impertinent example of the young upstart it has ever been my misfortune to meet. You will either be a huge success or end in the penitentiary. 'You're a poor benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man.' And, after all, I must keep you out of jail. You come high, but I've got to have you." He extended his hand.

Suddenly the telephone bell rang. Woodson was standing near the desk stand and without pausing to think that this was not his own office, he took up the receiver.

"Hello!" he said. "Hello, that you? Yes, I'm here. You were anxious about the outcome? Well, I'm on the verge of collapse, but it's all right—we win. Yes, I will. Good-by, dear."

Hanging up the receiver, he turned to Major Halliard.

"My fiancée," he stated, with much dignity, "wishes me to give you her love, and to ask you not to forget to bring home the theatre tickets this evening."

The major sat suddenly down in his swivel chair.

"Did she—did she——" He halted,

unable to go on.
"Oh, yes," announced Woodson. "It was her idea."

For a moment the major sat dumfounded. At last he rose up and his face beamed. He came over and slammed his fist down on the table and shouted with jubilation.

"She's a chip of the old block!" he crowed triumphantly. "You didn't do me—you couldn't do me! It took her to do it, and she inherited it from me!"





AD any one assured Lawrence Randall, either before or during his hastily arranged journey to the East, that he would read in a hand at bridge the epitome of

perplexities that had confronted him day and night for six years—perplexities that, no matter how he might urge business complications, were the real impulse of that trip—he would have laughed at the idea of such a thing in derisive scorn.

He played bridge well, with that same concentration of mind and purpose that had given him success in his chosen profession and a measure of wealth through far-sighted perception of land values and mining properties in the mineral country about the Great Lakes; but-bridge was to him a pastime, a game to play during the long winter afternoons and evenings when active work at the mines, of which he was superintendent, was stilled, and snow and ice like a flood covered all the land; a diversion, not an epitome of life, human problems, and human struggles, and the bridge table the place to read character in the raw, as it is to those who love to trace analogies and find comparisons. He was, he fancied, a materialist reading life literally. It took a hand at bridge to teach him that insight and intuition and inferences in regard to one's partner's hand, and the reading of the other chap's game are, in the brief moments at the card table, but the microcosm of every 'day's macrocosm.

His journey partook something of the nature of a flight. He was going as swiftly as trains and railroads and steam would permit; and with every turn of those whirling wheels that made this possible, he was repeating his cousin Linda's name, for he was going East on account of her. "Linda—Melinda! Linda—Melinda!" How soft and sweet the musical vowels; how quaint and old-fashioned! "Linda—my Linda!" Over and over the wheels sang it; there was no other sound in the universe but Linda Randall's name. And she had become engaged to Paul Casseigne, he had just heard!

Randall, himself, had not seen her in six years. They had been busy, eventful years to him, and he found now that they had changed his whole point of view in life. He had fought, beaten his way to a measure of success that was both gratifying and satisfying; and he was going back to make -he used the word advisedly-to make his cousin Linda marry him, engaged or not engaged-it made no difference to him-to Paul Casseigne. He would be content with no other word from her but that she would marry him, he assured himself.

Through all those years she had written to him with a measure of affection which ignored the circumstances of their last meeting, but he had never seen her since then, when she had refused to marry him, and taunted him with his incapacity to interest or win

her. When he had been in the East, she had been abroad; indeed, he had suspected more than once that she had timed her absences to cover periods of his returns. But Casseigne, rich and notable! It was monstrous, unbelievable that she was engaged to Paul Casseigne! Randall knew through bitter experience that there was nothing known to the science of stealing other men's properties that Casseigne could not suggest and put into results.

Casseigne should not marry Linda, Lawrence assured himself over and over on that long journey Eastward; and he was considering eagerly again, welcoming, in fact, the thought that had lived at the back of his mind all those years-that he loved Linda Randall. It was a thought, he believed, that he had crushed, beaten into shape with the club of his own pride, made it the servant of his will in his house of life. It rose up now to confront him, master of all his hopes and dreams and ideals, imperiously, derisively challenging him to thrust it away. It came out into the open now, not an impalpable thing of broken pride and rejected addresses and humiliated affectionnot that. It wore Linda Randall's lovely, changeful face, and it reproached him with neglect of her. It bore her gentlest, sweetest aspect, and it asked recognition of his own enduring, overwhelming love for her, besides his protection from such a man as Paul Cas-

And yet, as he drove up to his cousin's house late on the December afternoon of his arrival in town, and was ushered into the room he remembered so well, associated as it was with so many memories of his life and hers, warm and glowing with light, and sweet with the perfume of hothouse roses, he found not the Linda he had pictured, the gentle, clinging Linda, but the Linda of social life, gay, laughing, mistress of herself and her surrounding, pouring tea for two or three people, with her old aunt at her elbow, while Paul Casseigne, like a guest at ease, sat near her, before a small table upon which cards were spread, chatting

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now and then with her while he puzzled out the proper plays of these cards. Randall felt his hopes and dreams fade as mist in the reality presented him in this little scene; for Linda, after that first, glad, flashing gleam of surprise and delight in her face, had subsided into a kindly, pleasant cousin, the hostess interested impartially in all of her guests, making no more of Lawrence and that long journey across the half of the continent to reach her than if she were accustomed to having him do it every day of his life. There was no possibility of private conversation with her now, and, walking over to the table, before which Casseigne sat, Randall stood looking down at the moves he was making with a hand at bridge spread out before him. Before he was aware of it, Lawrence, too, was offering suggestions and shifting the cards this way and that, as deeply interested as Casseigne. Afterward when the other people had gone, Linda came and stood beside them.

"Have you made it out?" questioned Randall, turning to her.

"Certainly she has," laughed Casseigne. "That is the reason she wants to make some one else miserable."

"It is a puzzling hand to know just how to play," she said, "but there is a good deal in it."

She touched the cards as they lay face upward, and rearranged them according to their original positions:



"Z is the dealer, and declares no trumps," she explained, "the score being eight all on the rubber game; and this was the right make. B doubles, which is perfectly correct; and A leads the king of clubs, the winning club, to

show that tricks can be won in that suit. But he has to quit the club suit when he finds that B has none, or the dealer will set up that suit for himself. A then leads the top heart. B having doubled expects a heart lead, and is in difficulties about the discard, as anything but a heart unguards the discarded suit. B therefore discards a heart.

"When A leads a heart, B has to decide whether to drop the heart in three leads or to let the dealer in. The safer plan is to let the dealer in. Now, who

wins the game?"

"Lawrence," she said, turning suddenly to him with a gleam in her eyes, for which he was at a loss to account, and as if there were more in her words than their surface import, "take that hand home with you and study it, and then come and tell me to-morrow how you have solved it. I'll have to dress, now; I am going out to dinner, and then on to a play, and I'll have to send you both away, so take your puzzle and run off," she admonished them smilingly, with not a shade of difference in her manner of speaking to either of them in the way she dismissed them.

"But there is only one reading to that hand," interrupted Casseigne; "the hand of hearts is sure to win, and the diamonds and spades in it are bound to come in after the big cards are drawn in Z's hand; besides, there is the strength of clubs in partner's hand. Z can only count five tricks in his hand and the dummy."

Linda laughed. "Well, we will have to see what Lawrence says about it, to-morrow," she replied. "Only I warn you, if you sit up all night over that hand, you must not come to me for its solution before ten o'clock in the morning. I will not see you before then."

Unaccountably chilled, Lawrence left the house. To have come all that long distance to find Linda indeed lovelier than he had ever dreamed that she would be, but apparently, and lightly, indifferent to him; talking nonsense, moreover, about a trifling hand at bridge!

He ate his dinner gloomily and alone,

and then went out to walk up and down the chill December streets, the loneliest, most forlorn man in all the vast city, he assured himself. He was half inclined to take the train back home without seeing his cousin again. Why should he thrust himself into her life? What presumption, what impertinence on his part to have imagined that he might-that he could have more influence with her than Casseigne! Casseigne, who wore the assured air of a welcome guest in her home. When he returned to the hotel and there seemed nothing else to interest him, he took up the cards listlessly, deciding to work the hand out, as Linda had suggested. He might as well put in the time, since there was no chance of seeing her again that evening. He must wait until to-morrow, and might spend the hours with this as well as anything else.

Six years before, Lawrence had entered a room in Linda's home at the bidding of her father, and he had entered it slowly with that quickly smothered physical reluctance which involuntarily shakes us in the presence of helpless invalidism; and the room was dedicated to this. There was no future pictured in the face of the man who lived in that room; hope of that had died, but the desire of a man to impress himself, or at least his thought, upon the future never dies; and so Lawrence Randall the elder had sent for Lawrence Randall the younger, that through him, as a medium, his name should live again and his plans and projects secure the fulfillment that he had originally designed.

These were outlined swiftly as the invalid sat beside the window on an inspiring autumn morning. He felt fully justified in placing the burden of his affairs upon the younger man, his cousin, a Southerner by birth; for when, at the age of twelve, during a yellow-fever epidemic, the boy had been left the sole survivor of his family, Randall had sent for him and brought him to his home, husbanding his small inheritance until it had been sufficient to provide an extremely expensive edu-

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cation in engineering, the boy's chosen vocation; and finally using his influence had secured for him a situation in the mineral regions about the Great Lakes, where he had been now for more than

three years.

"You can choose your own time about winding up your affairs in the West," he assured the younger man, with a measure of ironic generosity, "but"—he motioned to himself, including in his gesture the implication of bodily suffering-"I am not given a period of very long endurance; and you and Linda will have to arrange matters between you to suit yourselves. I cannot undertake to interfere there. Suit yourselves-arrange it when you please before I go, or afterward.

He sank back exhaustedly, but with satisfaction in his bearing. Personal discussion and personal dissimulation in regard to his condition he placed

out of the question.

"You mean?" Lawrence hesitated. There had been no arrangement in regard to Linda's cooperation in business affairs. "You mean?" He sat forward, inquiringly, his hands between his knees, palm to palm.

The older man glared at him irri-

"You mean that Linda is to-" The invalid sat forward in his chair, his hair bristling, it almost seemed, the frown on his face portentous of wrath.

"I did not understand that Linda was

to be coexecutor.'

With a groan of desperation, Randall sank back in his chair, muttering "fool!" in anything but flattering accents; then he spread the rug more carefully about his knees, and then as if he were explaining his meaning to a very young and very stupid child, he said slowly:

"I want no fuss and feathers about the affair. I explained that fully, or I thought I did. You and Linda can go to a justice of the peace, if you wish, or you can call in a minister to the house; but just remember that I

can't stand any excitement."

Lawrence stared at him in absolute,

amazed unbelief; his face paled visibly, and then a great flood of color rushed over it. He got up, and walked across the room. The very walls seemed to reel with the shock. Marriage, the very thought of it, had been projected into the far-distant future in his scheme of life; nor had he ever consciously associated himself with either Linda or her father in the plans he had formed to make his own way in the world. Unconsciously, he had isolated himself from their mode of living by the tragedy that had set its mark upon him as a boy, and he had made education, success in his chosen profession the mistress of all of his dreams.

"You mean me to marry Linda?" he

asked in a low voice.
"What else?" roared Randall, sitting up stiff in his chair and glaring at Lawrence with fiery, furious eyes. have always understood that. else did you suppose I brought you up for? I wouldn't have kept you in my house two days, if I had not thought so from the time you were a boy." Then his face paled, his hands twitched. "You don't mean to tell me that you've been getting yourself mixed up in some love affair out in the West? There is no one else?"

Lawrence sat down beside his cousin, facing him. "There is no one else," he said simply, quietly. And as he said the words, a great joy and happiness came into his heart like a glowing ecstasy. In the blinding light of the selfrevelation that came with the words he seemed to be standing in its flood before an open door, before which he had stood all of his life, reverently afraid to put his hand out to open it, waiting—waiting for a word, a sign that would swing it open to the peal of ringing bells that sounded now through his very being, and up to the high courts of divine rapture. He had at last let himself know that no one else but Linda Randall had ever had even a portion of his thoughts; that she was, as he had known all his life, he was sure, the ultimate of his hopes, his dreams, his ideals of achievement and attainment; that professional success

was merely the offering that he meant to carry to her that he might ask of her its acceptance.

"Then," said the invalid relievedly, almost happily, "when Linda comes,

we'll talk about it."

She came into the room not long after, swiftly, eagerly, tenderness for her father pictured in her face; accustomed to his invalidism, she had no thought but that he would recover in time; and in this happy optimism, she was the very breath of youth, the perfume of charm, and in that room from which the future of life was excluded, and a man lived to secure bodily remission from pain for just one day-the present-she was the high promise of a radiant and sustained future. Of medium height, she looked taller, because of her slender grace; and in that piquant American irregularity of feature in which beauty yields itself to expression and the play of emotion, her eyes were sometimes black, sometimes gray, and about her mouth laughter lurked, and her complexion, exquisite in texture, showed her feelings in the color that "wavers to a lily, it trembles to a rose."

"Good morning, dear," she said tenderly to her father, nodding good-naturedly to Lawrence, whom she had seen two hours before on his arrival. "I came to your door long ago, but the nurse said you were not yet awake.'

"I've been watching for you, Linda," her father said, putting out his hand to take hers and draw her to his side, where she stood with her arm over his

shoulder.

"Sit down," he said.

"No," she objected. "If I stand here, I can look at Lawrence and show him how I can cower before his honorable importance." She laughed, but there was something in her cousin's face that troubled her vaguely; she looked from

him to her father.

Lawrence, gazing at her with the foreknowledge of what was coming, thought her lovelier than any woman he had ever seen. She had been an imperious, headstrong girl; but he saw in her now only a ripened completion, a sweet steadiness. His heart went out to her. He longed to take her in his arms and tell her that he loved her. She was so altogether perfect to his eyes, just what he would have chosen to have the years make her, as she bent her sweet, troubled, inquiring eyes upon

"I don't want to dictate to either of you," her father said calmly, in the most matter-of-fact voice, "Lawrence understands that, since we have discussed the matter this morning, and it will be. some little time yet before he will be able to close up his business affairs in the West and come on here to stay. You and he can arrange matters before he goes back or after he returns, just as it suits you two."

There was a large generosity in his voice and the wave of his hand, in his manner of saving them any trouble in the inexorable conditions that faced him, actual consideration for them rath-

er than himself.

"What do you mean?" she asked shortly, definitely perplexed and trou-

bled now.

"Oh!" Randall turned to Lawrence almost in irritable appeal. The thing itself seemed so simple that it merited no circumlocution. It could be so easily met. It was the most natural thing in the world to him, surely they had understood it always, just as he had. He had always planned for this, and he had no idea now that they were to be consulted in regard to it. He thought of them still as the children with no one but himself to look to, to arrange and plan their future as he had their past, for Linda's mother had "I mean the died when she was born. wedding, Linda," wearily.

She seemed to stiffen in her chair; she turned to her cousin and scanned him steadily for one full moment, the color coming and going in waves across her face, her lips set and stern, her gray eyes darkened to black as when a sudden storm sweeps across deep pools that have hitherto reflected sunny skies.

"And you-you-what do you say to this?" Her low voice was directed solely to her cousin. "Were you willing to make this arrangement—and afraid, or—too indifferent—was that it—to come and ask me yourself?"

Meeting her eyes levelly though he did, even coldly, perhaps, in the sudden chill of her words, Lawrence nevertheless felt the sting of her point of view in the lash of those words. Involuntarily he recalled the times when she, a child, had made him drag her in her little cart about the graveled paths of the garden until he was ready to drop, and would allow no one else to relieve him; and when he protested with the energy of youth at her tyranny, she had plied a small whip which she said she kept for this purpose, and bade him trudge on, and he had done so. He felt that whip now. Her eyes did not spare him. They read contempt and something more; almost she had said the word "coward." Indeed, he thought she had said it, so plainly had her thought spoken to him.

"Why should I marry Lawrence, father?" she asked. "He does not possess the first quality of a man—pluck. I'll not marry any one, if it pleases you. Certainly not Lawrence. He has demonstrated that he lacks the one thing that I ask in a husband—initiative."

She stooped and kissed her father, and before either of the men knew it, she had left the room; but Lawrence, catching sight of her face as she passed him, saw tears on her cheeks, tears that hurt him more than the sting of her words.

Randall the elder was deeply distressed. "Don't mind her, Lawrence," he quavered. "She will be sorry in a little while."

And Lawrence reassured him, promising him to come to him again whenever he sent for him, leaving him though he was now, for he would leave then, he told himself.

"There is nothing I would refuse you," he said with deep feeling; but he left the house without waiting to see Linda again; and before he had reached his destination on his journey back, he saw the death of Lawrence Randall in the paper. He telegraphed

to Linda, and asked if she would like to have him return, and the answer came back, crisp and curt: "No."

Arranging and rearranging the cards now, Lawrence sat playing them over and over—this way and that; suddenly he jumped to his feet, excitement and enthusiasm in his face.

"Why, how simple!" He spoke aloud, though he was alone in the room. "How did I miss it before?"

He began to pace the floor back and forth excitedly; then he sat down and played the cards calmly, to be sure that he was correct in his surmises. He was a man of few words generally. Now he felt that he must talk to some one.

Quickly, decisively, he went to the room telephone, and had them call Linda's house number.

"Are you up?" he questioned eager-

ly, when she answered him.
"Yes," she laughed, "but I am just going to bed. It is nearly twelve o'clock."

"Oh, no, you are not going to bed," he assured her. "I don't care what time it is, for I'm coming up. I've found the play of those cards."

"But it is too late," she objected, "and auntie has been in bed for hours."

"Well, we never minded auntie in our lives, did we?" he recalled. "And we'll let her stay in bed. I'll be with you in ten minutes." He rang off before she had a chance to speak again.

She was sitting in a chair beside a table upon which stood a lighted electrolier which cast its warm glow over her, leaving the rest of the room almost in shadow, while her wrap, which she had just thrown aside on the back of her chair, lent its opulence of embroidery and sheen of velvet to give point and character to the subdued color in the shadowed room. She was more radiant than his most fanciful dreams of her had ever pictured, but as he stood beside her, tall, thin, a trifle worn in the struggle with the forces of nature and life, she saw written in his face, in his blue eyes, a splendid look of command. He was master, she realized, of himself and fate, and she,

in her inmost neart, bowed to it. She did not rise, however, from her chair, but laughingly, lazily, held out her hand

to him in greeting.

"Stand up, Linda, and welcome me." There was a thrill in his voice that moved her. As she rose, he took her in his arms and kissed her full on the lips. Her face flushed, her eyes dropped, she pushed him from her murmuring his name in protest, but upon the edge of her eyelashes there was the faint gleam of tears which she tried to hide.

"It's six years, Linda, since you sent

me away. Six years!"

And you have just remembered it?" "No, you know better than that," he answered quickly. "I have remembered it always, and every time that you have run away from me, and long contemplation has taught me that I must not give you a chance to do so again. I've come on to marry you this time.'

The color flashed and rolled over her face and then receded. She stared at him a moment in sheer surprise, and then she sat forward in the chair into which she had dropped, and said, a slow smile moving over her lips:

"And I—I, have I nothing to say in the matter? Nothing more than I had six years ago? Men, as a rule, ask women to marry them. They do not give out the impression, whether they feel it or not, that they are the only beings to be considered on the subject.

Their eyes met and clashed with the meaning of memory in them for both. "They do, if you are you, and I am I," he asserted stoutly. "I was a fool that I did not play the game out six years ago; and Linda, Linda, I wanted to come back-why didn't you let me?" His voice shook; he was deeply moved.

"Why did you not come, then?" There was a certain deliberation in her accents, a cool withdrawal of self, a sweet denial of his right to any place in her life, and she seemed to be receding farther and farther as she added: "Why should I tell you what to do, or dictate your line of conduct to you?"

Randall threw his head back, the man's protest against being put in the wrong, holding, meanwhile, the consciousness of right. "Wellpaused, putting the subject from him. "We have changed all that. I've come to marry you—to-day—it is the next day, another day now. Listen, listen, Linda—the miidnight bells are ringing! You are going to marry me to-day."

She laughed a low, sweet, ringing laugh of denial, and shook her head.

"And why?"

"Because I can take you then out of Paul Casseigne's sight. Because I don't intend to let Paul Casseigne marry you," he affirmed, flaming into a jealous protest at that laugh of denial.

"And you are going to marry me to keep me from marrying Paul Casseigne?" she asked incredulously, un-

believingly.

"I am going to marry you because I love you; because I have loved you all of my life, it seems to me," Randall declared positively, insistently. "And you are going to marry me because you told me so in that play of cards that you gave me to puzzle out. The game is not always to the hand with the biggest heart picture cards, Linda, like Casseigne's, but to the hand that can play against it with strategy. The dealer wins that game on his long suit of small clubs, set up after they have let the knave of hearts in-the poor old knave of hearts, allowed to come in on sufferance." He laughed softly, amusedly, joyously, as he held out his arms to

But she did not move; straight and still, and slender, she stood before him, her eyes searching him earnestly.

"Why-why"-there was a queer little catch in her voice, as if a sigh had involuntarily escaped-"why, in all these years, have you never tried to play the game out? I've been only the dummy, but"-a whimsical little smile crept over her lips, she took a step forward, her hands held out to him-"I have always known that long suit would win-if you would-take the initiative -and play the cards."



CHAPTER I.



EFRED," Miss Sylvia Sligh said to her chauffeur, "you must contrive to scrape an acquaintance with the chauffeur of Mr. Theodore Gomez."

Miss Sligh had herself made more than one endeavor to penetrate within the walls of the Park Lane mansion built and inhabited by the latest South African millionaire, Mr. Theodore Gomez.

It was known that Mrs. Gomez, who was the daughter of a linen draper, was set upon her husband acquiring a title, and for that reason had become intensely charitable. Sylvia had therefore sought an interview with the millionaire's wife, first as secretary to a "Mothers' Home for Young Women in Pusiness," and secondly as a sister of charity.

Her arts had been wasted. On the occasion of her first visit, Mrs. Gomez was engaged in giving tea to several persons of title. Sylvia was asked to call again, and when she did so in the person of a sister of charity, she was kept waiting an hour, and then handed a couple of sovereigns for the "Babies' Crêche in Bermondsey," with a message of regret from Mrs. Gomez that she was too busy to see her.

Nevertheless, she had a chance of observing the ways of the household. Liveried servants were in evidence everywhere, and from the anteroom,

wherein she waited, Sylvia overheard some of their talk among themselves.

Miss Sligh was by no means ill-looking; but the lines of her well-made figure were concealed by her shapeless black gown, her plentiful light brown hair was hidden by her white cap and black veil, and her fresh pink face was lowered over a book of devotions. Consequently the menservants, after a glance in her direction, decided that she was "one of them sponging charity sharks," and paid no attention to her.

Smithers, an elegant youth of four or five and twenty, was bewailing his hard fate to an elder manservant.

"At least you are a gentleman's gentleman," he was saying. "But to be at the beck and call of a kid only just out of a perambulator lets a fellow down. I've 'alf a mind to chuck it now Susan is leaving. The brat himself got her turned off. He up and told 'er she didn't know 'ow to pronounce 'er words and mimicked 'er before 'is pa and ma! A kid of five! Says the master: 'Derrick is quite right; Susan and Smithers talk cockney. Why can't you engage a lady to look after him?' Susan wasn't far from the key'ole, and she comes to me in a flood of tears. These parvenoos are all alike!"

"They're the only people who have any cash at present," the older man returned. "I'd sooner be paid good wages by a parvenoo than have 'em owed me by a lord. But it takes the edge off one's style to see the missus kow-tow to any one with a 'andle to their names. Why, at Berkshire's place, where I

stayed three years, dooks and duchesses were as plentiful as blackberries, and we upper servants made no more count of 'em than if they'd been plain misters and missesses. It's all 'abit. Susan will stay her month, I suppose."

"She'll try to stick it, for my sake. Besides, there's the Leeds visit. The kid won't be left behind, and I'm dashed if I can wash his lace collars

and keep his fingers clean."

A servant entering with the two guineas from Mrs. Gomez for the Bermondsey Crêche cut short Sylvia Sligh's visit at this point, and compelled her

to take her leave.

She had learned a good deal, but she wanted to know more. It was early in April, and for the past month the name of Theodore Gomez had filled the newspapers. Anecdotes about him, throwing light on his keenness in business, his sordid early life, and his preference for a chop and potatoes to the most sumptuous fare, filled the gossip corners of the illustrated weeklies; and his devotion to his only child was quoted as though no father had ever cared for his son before.

The amount of his fortune was fixed at all sorts of sums between three and five millions, and Sylvia longed ardently to help him in spending them. Six months before, she the elder daughter of a ruined stockbroker, who had committed suicide, had started to make a fortune for herself and her family of four persons, comprising her mother, a sister of seventeen, and two

schoolboy brothers.

She had done remarkably well by the two enterprises she had planned and carried out, and the various loans she had effected. By plausible stories, by a close study of the weaknesses of human nature, and considerable cleverness in "making up," which she inherited as the daughter of an actress, Miss Sylvia Sligh had succeeded in netting over five thousand pounds.

But her expenses had been large, and the risks she ran considerable. She had hired a furnished mansion for her family in an out-of-the-way part of Lancashire, and settled them there under the high-sounding name of "Trevor Cavendish." Her mother, a guileless lady who believed everything her daughter told her, was installed at the Hall, Penmore, as the place was called, in great comfort, with three women servants, a groom and gardener, and a pony carriage. Lilian, the younger girl, had passed the coldest weeks of the winter at an expensive sanitarium in Bournemouth, and the two boys were receiving an excellent education, while Sylvia herself spent a great part of her life in her motor car.

The car was half the battle to a "lady adventurer," such as was Sylvia Sligh. That, and her ladylike appearance, enabled her to roam all over England without exciting attention. Her chauffeur, Alfred Somers, was a man she had saved from disgrace and ruin, and who, by reason of his own record, shut his eyes to the dubious commercial morality of his employer.

But all these luxuries cost money, and Sylvia foresaw that at the rate she was living her booty would not last

long.

She had been compelled to "lie low" for over four months after her Liverpool escapade. To her family she explained that she was about to take a trip to Chicago, in order to see about will her uncle, Jonas Burton, had made before he died there, leaving eighty thousand pounds to her mother.

thousand pounds to her mother.

Sylvia Sligh had been driven away from home by Alfred Somers in order to take the boat from Liverpool. But Ramsgate and not Liverpool was her destination. In Liverpool there lurked, she well knew, an enemy determined to hunt her down, in the person of Mr. Harry Clumber, justice of the peace, and a man of wealth and standing, whom she had counted among her victims.

To track her openly, Miss Sligh knew that he dared not do. Her schemes were designed to keep her to some extent within the law. But it had come to her knowledge that Mr. Clumber was employing every hour of his leisure to track a certain gold-haired widow who had called herself "Mrs. Jonas

Burton" and who had stolen his heart and a certain portion of his money.

Sylvia's chief cleverness lay in her lightning comprehension of the character of the people she dealt with. She knew enough of Harry Clumber to be afraid of him; so she had fled to Ramsgate, beyond which town, in a small public house called The Stranded Boat on the road to Sandwich, she took shelter for a time.

The Stranded Boat was kept by a retired prize fighter called Michael Thurbell and his wife Julia, who had once been Sylvia's nurse. They had no children, and Julia cherished an unreasoning adoration for Sylvia, who for her part was sincerely fond of her old Yorkshire nurse.

The motherless children of Alfred Somers, the chauffeur, were, by Sylvia's orders, sent down from Ealing to The Stranded Boat for a change of air at Easter.

Sylvia was good-natured, but there was a method in her generosity.

She wanted Julia Thurbell to help her in a scheme she was mentally developing. And she meant that Alfred Somers, and possibly Alfred Somers' children, should play a part in it.

This new plan of hers concerned that much-advertised person, Mr. Theodore Gomez, millionaire, of Park Lane.

Sylvia put up in town at the Hotel Cecil, whither Julia accompanied her in the capacity of maid. Mrs. Thurbell was, as she expressed it, "allus ready for a jaunt," and she had announced her departure to her husband in a few concise words.

"Ah'm gooing oop wi' Miss Sylvia to Loondon. You will knaw Ah'm back when you sees me. Don't get droonk!"

Prize-fighting Mr. Thurbell took her desertion meekly; and Julia enjoyed herself vastly in "Loondon."

Meantime, Alfred Somers fraternized with the chauffeur of the millionaire, whom he tracked to a public house in the neighborhood of Park Lane.

"It's next week the Gomez lot are going to Leeds, Miss Cavendish," Somers told Sylvia. "On the twelfth Mr. Gomez has to be there for the opening of the Gomez wing in the new hospital by one of the princesses. He had it built in memory of his mother, who was a Leeds woman. It has cost him ten thousand pounds."

"Does he go alone?" asked Sylvia. "Oh, no! Mrs. Gomez wouldn't miss being introduced to a royal princess for anything. And they never move without that little fuzzy-haired kid of theirs," replied Somers.

theirs," replied Somers.

At half-past ten on the following morning a dark-haired young woman, neatly dressed in a close bonnet and long veil and cloak suggestive of a cross between a hospital nurse and a children's maid, presented herself before the doors of the Park Lane mansion, and asked to see Mrs. Gomez.

She handed the footman a card upon which was printed:

"The Honorable Frances Welburne."
Written in pencil across the top of
the card were the words:

Highly recommended by the Baroness Wolfenstein.

After a few minutes' delay, the darkhaired young woman was told to follow the footman upstairs.

Sylvia Sligh was at length successful, and on this, her third visit, was shown into the presence of Mrs. Theodore Gomez.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Gomez was a ponderous woman, with a massive head of curly black hair, an overhanging nose, and a protruding under jaw. She was sufficiently intelligent to know that people considered both her and her husband "bounders"; she had frequently overheard them saying so, and the fact disturbed her natural self-satisfaction.

The only remedy she knew of was to get a title, since wealth alone could not make her respected among these singular people. At least her darling Derrick should not be disgraced by having to grow up a plain mister. The child was seated on the floor when Sylvia entered, busily engaged in tormenting his mother's Japanese terrier.

He was a handsome, impish-looking little creature, with the bright eyes and restless movements of a marmoset, and was dressed as usual in white velvet. Since receiving the card, Mrs. Gomez had consulted her book on the peerage, in which she had discovered that Lord Sieveley was a widowed viscount of seventy, and that the Honorable Frances Welburne was his sixth daughter, aged twenty-seven.

She greeted Sylvia in the friendliest

fashion.

"I believe I have met your father, Miss Welburne," she said. "Possibly it was at court. And that charming little old Baroness Wolfenstein I met at dinner last month. I suppose you have come to ask my aid about some charity, for I see you have taken up nursing. How very sweet and noble of you!"

"I am afraid I don't deserve your praise, Mrs. Gomez. I gave you my real name, but I try to keep my position a secret. The fact is, my father's estates are so heavily encumbered that we have practically nothing. So I am trying to earn my own living as a

nurse."

"Oh, but you will never be able to put up with menial work!" Mrs. Gomez demurred.

"I don't mind what I do, provided that I can be with children. Is this your little boy? What a dear, bright, little fellow!"

"He's bright enough," returned the fond mother. "He gets the most frantic headaches, and our doctor, Sir Henry Thornton, forbids us teaching him even his alphabet until he is eight."

"I don't wonder!" Sylvia said. Then she slipped down on her knees by the boy, who was staring at her fixedly, and gently removed the dog from the grasp of his cruel little hands. Sylvia was fond of dogs, and could not endure to see them tortured.

"Think, dear," she said, "if you hurt the dog's eyes, it would be always in the dark. You yourself hate that, don't

you?"

"I hate it," the child said. "But

p'raps the dog likes it. I don't like the color of your hair!"

"You must forgive him, Miss Welburne," his mother said. "My social duties take up so much of my time that he has been too much with servants."

"I wish you would engage me to look after him!" Sylvia exclaimed. "Just as nursemaid. I am thoroughly used to my sisters' children, and really must earn my living. The Baroness Wolfenstein suggested I should call and see you about it. She thought a child like Derrick, delicate and sensitive, ought to have ladies about him. And I believe he would like me, wouldn't you, Derrick?"

"I like your voice," the boy said. "Your hair is ugly. It is so flat."

"But, dear Miss Welburne, you could not possibly mix with the other servants. Certainly you would take your meals in the nursery. But my maid Virginie has hers there, too. She was four years with the Comtesse de Lourdes. But, for you—"

"I am sure I should get on with her capitally," said Sylvia. "It would rub up my French. As to this boy, he is a dear, and we shall be capital friends."

She held the child's hands as she spoke, and under the hypnotism of her firm touch Derrick softened.

"I shall like you, I think," he said.
"Susan pinches me. And she kisses
Smithers. Shall you kiss Smithers, if
you come?"

"I think I may promise I won't do

that!" said Sylvia.

"Well, really, Miss Welburne, of course it would be charming to have

a lady of your position-

"Please, Mrs. Gomez, forget that! But if you think my services are worth—say, thirty pounds a year—I shall be delighted to take the situation. Only please call me Fanny, as I shall call you madam, and please keep my father's name a secret. He is in Canada with one of my sisters, and he is far from well. I don't think it in the least derogatory to have to go out as a nursemaid, especially in such a family as yours. My father did not have us sufficiently well educated to be govern-

But I don't want any of his

friends to know just what I am doing."
"Of course I shall respect your wishes. It has always been my desire to have a real lady with my pet. You shall have forty pounds a year; a lady cannot take less. When would you like to come to me?"

"As soon as you have applied for my references," Sylvia answered. most anxious to begin work."

"I will write to the baroness at once," said Mrs. Gomez, greatly elated at the idea of having a viscount's daughter in her service. "To-day is Wednesday. Thursday of next week we are going Could you take up your to Leeds. duties next Saturday night?"

"I should be delighted."

"One thing is very important," Mrs. "The footman Gomez remarked. Smithers or you must be always with Derrick, unless he is with his father or me. On no account must he be left alone. Out of doors both you and Smithers go with him. He must never be out of your sight. I cannot explain why to you just now; but when I do, you will thoroughly understand." Sylvia Sligh understood already.

The gates of the Park Lane house had hardly closed upon her when she set off at a rapid pace to the Marble Arch, near which she found Alfred Somers waiting with the dark green motor car.

To-day the car was closed, and Sylvia sprang inside after giving the address to her chauffeur:

"Westminster Abbey Mansions.

Drive slowly!"

By the time the car arrived before the block of flats in which resided Sylvia's godmother, that very adventurous old lady, the Baroness Wolfenstein, the dark-haired nurse in the close bonnet and veil and cloak, was transformed into fair-haired Sylvia Sligh, in the neat blue serge dress she most affected, under a light brown motor coat and smart little light brown motor cap.

The baroness was seventy, and she had taught Sylvia all the artfulness and knowledge of the world the girl

possessed.

At first she was angry at the use which had been made of her name; but presently she allowed her goddaughter to talk her round.

"As I have told you, I did meet one of these Sieveley girls in a cheap German boarding house," she said, "and she told me she meant to earn her own living. But I won't be dragged into this business! It is a frightfully risky game you are playing-

"I have played riskier," Sylvia broke in, "and brought them off with success. Of course, you can always say an impostor deceived you. Only write that letter, and I promise to remember you

when pay time comes."

"Upon my word, it's a pity you are not a man!" the little baroness exclaimed fondly. "How you would have made things hum in the City!"

Sylvia took an affectionate farewell of her, and drove back in her car to the Hotel Cecil. After lunch she traveled in the car to Ealing, where the party of herself and her maid and chauffeur were reënforced by Alfred Somers' two little girls, aged respectively four and six.

Off went the car again at the highest speed permitted by the law, and in the late afternoon of the following day Mrs. Julia Thurbell found herself in a steep and narrow country road five miles out of Leeds, before the garden gate of the substantial cottage in which she had been born and reared.

Her mother, a deaf old dame, lived there still, and grumbled at having to

put up the whole party.

But Julia talked her down, and Thursday and Friday night Sylvia slept the sleep of the healthily unjust in the cottage at night, and made investigations in the town of Leeds during the day.

Saturday morning very early she took the train back to London, and in the evening of that day the "Honorable Frances Welburne," otherwise "Fanny," in her nurse's bonnet over her smooth, dark hair, made her appearance in a four-wheeled cab outside the mansion in Park Lane, with a large leather-covered dress basket, and was duly installed as domestic attendant to Derrick, only son and heir of Mr. Theodore Gomez, the millionaire.

CHAPTER III.

Sylvia made an admirable nursemaid. At five years old, Derrick was blasé. He had been surfeited with toys, sweets, luxuries, and amusements, until he had come to consider that the world existed

for his entertainment.

His father, a sombre-looking man, sunken of eye, ill-dressed, and dyspeptic-looking, idolized him, and lived in a fever of apprehension lest the child should be ill or should be carried off from him.

Theodore Gomez's taciturnity and bad manners were remarkable. The titled guests invited by Mrs. Gomez soon left off trying to be polite to the master of the house, who snubbed them

indiscriminately.

He loved to see "plenty of people about," and was ready enough to spend lavishly the money he had got into the habit of making easily. But he had worked his way up from grinding poverty, and had gathered a profound contempt for the world, which had kicked him when he was down and was now ready to deify him on account of the fortune he had earned in a thoroughly unprincipled fashion.

He was not impressed when his wife informed him "as a great secret" that the Honorable Frances Welburne, Lord Sieveley's sixth daughter, had entered

her service as a nursemaid.
"Did you get a character from her

last place?" he asked dryly.

"My dear Theo, she has naturally never been out before. The Baroness Wolfenstein recommended her to come to me, as she knew I should understand how to treat a person of family."

"Is servantgirlism a new fad of these fashionable fools?" her husband asked. "I don't care to trust my boy to an

empty-headed amateur."

But coming to the day nursery on Sunday, he was inclined to alter his opinion. The "amateur" had actually succeeded in keeping Derrick amused. She had taken him to church, and was teaching the child to sing the hymns and accompanying them on the nursery piano. Sylvia played and sang with taste, and the millionaire spent two hours observing her closely with his dull black eyes.

"Your amateur girl is all right," he said to his wife. "I would rather have the child under her care at Leeds than with that flighty Susan. Although she is a lady, she seems to have some

braine "

Snobbishness, as Sylvia knew, is as rife among servants as among their social superiors. The Gomez domestics, who would have been insolent to a governess, deeming her "no better than themselves," were impressed by the fact, which Mrs. Gomez made known to her maid, Mademoiselle Virginie, that "Fanny was an honorable in disguise, and daughter to a lord." Had Sylvia given herself airs, they might have resented them. But her manners were always the same—quiet, courteous. and natural; for Sylvia's strong point was her excellent manner. And the Gomez servants, whose training taught them to recognize a lady when they saw one, had no fault to find with her.

The Gomez family arrived at the Grand Hotel, Leeds, late on Thursday afternoon, attended by Smithers, Mr. Gomez's man, Virginie, and the admir-

able "Fanny."

The ceremony was to take place on Saturday morning. All Friday Mrs. Gomez was in her element, presiding over a stall at a bazaar in aid of a local charity, at which all the other stall holders were titled. She had the satisfaction of informing as many as possible of these ladies that her little boy's nurse was "daughter of a well-known nobleman, though I have promised not to reveal her name."

Hardly for a moment was Sylvia alone with her precious charge until he was put to bed in a room between her own and his mother's, and opposite that of his man. Spoilt as he was, Sylvia did not dislike the child, who, under proper training, would, she believed, develop an affectionate disposition and

considerable intelligence; but proper training he was never likely to have with a father who idolized him and a mother who indulged his every whim.

The Leeds visit was to last over Sunday. On Saturday a banquet was to follow the opening of the Gomez wing, and in the evening a grand concert was to be given in aid of the hospital, at which Madame Toramini was to sing, and which was to be attended by the mayor and mayoress, and by those distinguished philanthropists, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Gomez.

At Friday's bazaar, in an outburst of generosity, Sylvia had bought a very large black-haired "Japanese Tommy" doll at one of the stalls.

"It is for a good cause," she had explained to her employer, "and my sister's youngest baby will be delighted to have a doll much bigger than herself."

There was plenty of room to pack the toy in the enormous dress basket which "Fanny" had brought to Leeds, and which stood in her bedroom at the hotel.

"It is the only piece of luggage I have," she explained to Virginie. "And for these nurses' dresses one wants such a lot of aprons and caps and collars and cuffs to look nice."

She was much impressed by Saturday's ceremony, and had to put her handkerchief to her eyes when her young master, in white velvet and a point lace collar, advanced to offer a bouquet to the royal princess, and was good-naturedly kissed by that gracious lady.

The dull eyes of Derrick's father lit with pride as they fell on the child's excited face. The attention was more to him than the banquet at which his health was drunk with enthusiasm after speeches chronicling his generosity.

Derrick, not being old enough to attend a public lunch, had his early dinner at the hotel, and was sent for a drive in Roundhay Park with Smithers and "Fanny" in attendance.

On his return, he kicked and

On his return, he kicked and screamed with passion, and could hardly have been removed from the carriage but for the timely assistance of

a passing chauffeur. "Fanny" pressed something into the chauffeur's hand. A tip, Smithers imagined; but Alfred Somers, when he opened the little slip of paper, found the following words inscribed thereon:

Railway station at eight-thirty.

The millionaire and his wife partook of a light dinner, and Derrick had the satisfaction of seeing his mother before she left for the concert, attired in white satin and ablaze with diamonds.

"You look like a fairy queen on a Christmas tree," he said, and his mother, who thought it was a compliment, hugged him for his cleverness.

His father embraced him fondly, too, coming into the nursery where the child was sitting down to his supper.

Sylvia Sligh, in her nurse's cap and apron, watched the parents' affectionate caresses with clear, critical gray

She then distracted Derrick's attention by lending him the Japanese doll to play with, and in preparing his sponge cakes and hot milk she mixed in the latter a powder she took from her pocket.

Her fingers shook a little as she stirred the milk.

"I do hope it won't hurt him!" she said to herself.

Smithers had come to her and asked whether his presence would be missed if he "joined a friend for half an hour at billiards.

"If you have the least objection, Miss Fanny, I'll stay," he said. "But I thought when the young gentleman is safe in bed, if I could slip across to the West Riding Social Club—"

"Go, by all means," Sylvia returned.
"I shall not leave Master Derrick for a moment, and Mademoiselle Virginie will be in the next room."

A dressing room between the sleeping apartment of Mrs. Gomez and that of her son had been turned into a day nursery, and there Virginie was yawning over a novel. Presently Sylvia heard her slip outside. Virginie had attracted an admirer in the person of the French valet to a hotel visitor, and

the pair were engaged in courting in

the passage.

Sylvia's gray eyes became very bright, and her heart began to beat faster. She had taken Derrick into his bedroom to undress him before the fire, but already he had fallen into a heavy sleep. Laying him gently on the bed, without removing his clothes, she went to her own room, and unlocked her dress basket. There was very little inside it beyond her serge dress and her motor cap and coat.

She took a penknife from her pocket, and kneeling down by the basket, deliberately made several slits in the leather covering. Then she put out her nurse's bonnet and cloak, took a small revolver from her pocket and closely examined it, and going back to where the child lay fast asleep, she

waited.

Ten, twenty minutes went by. Sylvia's color began to pale. Was her great scheme going to fail at this critical moment?

Was it possible that the Baroness Wolfenstein had misunderstood her tel-

egram?

At twenty minutes past eight the signal came in the person of a telegraph boy with a message for "Frances Welburne, Grand Hotel, Leeds.'

It was signed "Alice Learnington" and contained these words:

Just received cablegram from Mary at Montreal. Our father has had most serious relapse. Only a question of days. He asks Entreat you to join him at once, Am too ill to move, but have cabled you will

"My poor father! How terrible!" exclaimed the nurse. "No, there is no answer," she added to the boy, who forthwith retired.

Her grief would appear to have af-fected her brain, for she proceeded to execute some most singular arrange-

First she seized on the Japanese doll with which Derrick had been playing, dressed it in Derrick's nightgown, and placed it in Derrick's bed, with its face turned to the wall. Then she put out the electric light, and carried

Derrick himself very carefully into her own apartment.

A few minutes later, dressed in her bonnet and cloak, with very red eyes and what appeared to be tears running down her cheeks, she rushed out in search of Virginie, and found that young lady at the end of the corridor, busily engaged in flirting.

The valet retired as Sylvia advanced

hurriedly with her telegram,
"Read it, Mademoiselle Virginie!" she exclaimed. "You know enough English to understand. It is from my married sister, Lady Leamington. I must go at once! If I leave Leeds before nine I can get to Liverpool tonight and sail to-morrow morning.'

'Rut madame-

"You must explain to her. I love my father dearly, and he was angry with me for earning my own living. I should never forgive myself if he died without forgiving me!"

She was hurrying back toward her own room, with Virginie following her,

puzzled and reluctant.

"But there is Derrick," the Frenchwoman said, "he must not be left

alone for-

"You will stay with him, Mademoiselle Virginie. He is in bed and sound asleep. Look in; you can see his head by the firelight. I should have liked to kiss him good-by. But I dare not risk waking him. Here, porter, boots!" she cried to an attendant who was passing. "Help me down with this dress basket! It is rather heavy, as there are a lot of books in it. If you will put it quickly on a four-wheeler I will give you five shillings. Good-by, Mademoiselle Virginie! I will write to madame and explain. She knows the address of my friends. But I must go!"

And go she did, in a four-wheeler to the station, where she had her dress trunk conveyed not to a train, but to the space for luggage at the back of a green motor car which was waiting

near the station entrance.

"We can catch the connecting train better that way," she said in a loud voice, as she sprang into the car.

No one was listening, and no one

made any move to impede her progress as the motor car shot into the darkness, and had very soon left the streets of Leeds far behind and was racing uphill toward the open country.

In a quiet road Sylvia opened the

window and stopped the car.

"Let me have him in with me now, Alfred," she said, "Here is the key of the trunk. I have wrapped a shawl round him, but I am dreadfully afraid

he will be cold.

At nine o'clock at night, in a country road three miles out of Leeds, the Honorable Frances Welburne's dress trunk was unlocked, and from its depths drugged and unconscious, the small form of Theodore Gomez's son and heir was withdrawn and placed in the

arms of Miss Sylvia Sligh.

Next day Alfred Somers' little girls were delighted with their new playfellow. He was not quite right in his head, they had been told, and would talk much nonsense, which Derrick certainly did. But there were a large garden and an orchard to play in, and there were two little girls to bully, and Julia Thurbell and her mother to keep him in order and feed him on cakes and cream. And Derrick Gomez had never been so happy in his life.

Meanwhile, a hue and cry was being raised all over England; for the heir to three millions is not kidnapped every

At first Mrs. Gomez was not willing to connect her son's disappearance with the flight of that superior person, the Honorable Frances Welburne. But investigations proved that the real Miss Frances Welburne was in Germany, that Lord Sieveley was enjoying the best of health in Canada, and that the Baroness Wolfenstein had been entirely deceived as to the identity of the lady she had recommended as nurse-maid to Mrs. Theodore Gomez.

All these discoveries took time. Three weeks passed. The papers grew tired of headlines concerning the "Kidnapping of a Millionaire's Son and Heir," and descriptions of the missing child and the missing nurse. Smithers and Virginie were dismissed, and Theodore Gomez was heartbroken. His love for his boy was the strongest feeling he possessed, and he spent his time hurrying from one police station to another, offering colossal rewards for the recovery of his lost treasure.

At last, in Park Lane, a typewritten letter with the City postmark reached

It ran as follows:

SIR: Your child Derrick is safe and well. I am one who has been made penniless by your swindling companies, and I have done this to revenge myself. I am going to begin again in another continent, and have half a mind to take your boy with me to help work for me, as he seems bright. will give me five thousand pounds for a fresh start you shall have him back. No good to show this to the police. If you try them, I shall find out through my spies and leave the country. But if you mean this to be between you and me, stop in front of the statue of Queen Anne before St. Paul's at eleven to-morrow morning and take off your hat. You will be seen and will receive another letter, telling you where to bring the money and receive the child. I enclose a lock of his hair and a mother-of-pearl button off his coat to show you this is genuine.

A MAN YOU RUINED.

Theodore Gomez neither told the police nor told his wife. But he took off his hat to Queen Anne at eleven o'clock the next morning. His soul hungered so much for a sight of his child that he could not bargain or temporize.

Within an hour another typewritten letter was left at his office by a mes-

senger.

Go to Leeds and take with you five thousand pounds in gold. Notes are of no use. From Leeds take a motor car to the village of Reginald's Cross, off the York road. Two miles beyond is a white house at four cross-Be there with the money alone in the roads. car with the chauffeur at ten o'clock. If you act squarely in this, you shall have your child safe and well. If you call in the police you safe and well. If you ca will never see him again.

At ten o'clock on a night of pouring April rain Theodore Gomez arrived at the spot indicated, where a lonely house of white stone, half in ruins, stood at four crossroads. The place was uninhabited, and shunned at night, as it was reported to be haunted.

A young man in a motor coat and

motor goggles and mask approached the car, for which he had evidently been watching. Presenting a pistol at the head of the startled chauffeur, he signed to Mr. Gomez to enter the house, in the front room of which a light appeared, and himself assisted in removing the weighty box of gold contained in the car.

With his penknife he then proceeded to puncture the tires of the hired vehicle, while Theodore Gomez, by the light of a candle, handed over the money to the care of another man in a motor coat and motor goggles, and had his little son, alive and well, but fast

asleep, placed in his arms.

Long before the damage to the tires could be repaired, a green motor car which was in waiting at the back of the house was on the road, speeding like an express train in the direction of Liverpool.

Alfred Somers was driving, and within, armed with a revolver and dressed as a chauffeur, sat Miss Sylvia Sligh, with a box of gold at her

feet.

"The best month's work I ever did in my life," she murmured, as she changed to a feminine toilet. "But I don't leave this car until I am safe at the Hall, Penmore, as Miss Trevor Cavendish!"



A PRAYER TO AZRAEL

BECAUSE thy face is more compassionate
Than God's own angel Pity, he who stands
Above the world with healing in his hands,
Early and late,

Therefore I dare to ask a little thing.

Though unto thee no man is small or great, The humblest beggar, the anointed king Of one estate.

Yet, oh, how often, often on thy breast

The little children rest, Feeling thy sombre arms about them close

As twilight folds a rose,

So, even I this little prayer dare bring Unto thy pitying.

I pray thee find me not my hour to go
Closed within any dwelling men have made—
Those four, poor walls where I may crouch afraid
As from a foe;

But seek me on my hills, my hills whereon The free winds drift and blow,

Between the green and gold of earth and sun, Ah, find me so!

I would not quite forget in some new birth The joy of this my earth,

Nor lose what time I look on Paradise,

The vision in my eyes Of green boughs swaying in a singing wind.

Oh, Azrael, be kind!

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



CHAPTER I.



HE rosy dusk of a June evening lay upon great London town. In the soft, still twilight, the trees in Hyde Park loomed large. And the Serpentine, dark and

quiet, reflected the stars that stole into the purple sky. It was the hour when the noises of traffic had ceased, and the laughter, the lights, and the gayety of the evening had not yet begun.

Nearly every house in the spacious Queen's Gate was illuminated. The balconies and windows were masses of pink and white blooms, whose delicate odor made the summer night fragrant. Three great houses in a row, however, showed no signs of festivity. On the drawing-room balcony of the middle mansion, Castlemaine House, Lady Susan Battle, tall, broad, and oracular, was laying down the law and the prophets to her brother, the Earl of Castlemaine, and the heir presumptive, Fermor.

"I protest," cried Lady Susan wrathfully, arranging her draperies of a violent red; "the next thing I expect to hear is that some American has taken Buckingham Palace for the season and converted Westminster Abbey into his private chapel. What do you think that good-looking, painted Jezebel, Flora Bellenden, told me to-day? That this man, Seymour, who lives next door, had taken King's Lyndon on a seven years' lease. I told her

she didn't know what she was talking about, but nothing can abash that woman."

At the mention of Mrs. Bellenden's name Lord Castlemaine gave Fermor a peculiar half glance, which, however, discovered nothing. Fermor, the perfect type of a slim, sinewy, high-caste Englishman, did not so much as wink an eyelash at the mention of the name of the lady, whom he might be supposed to defend from the charge of

being a painted Jezebel. Lady Susan, having mounted her hobby, which was the detestation of Americans, proceeded to lash it and spur it. Lord Castlemaine listened with a grin. He was not without sympathy for the Lady Susan Battles of England. It was a grievous thing that, with hordes of unmarried girls in England and a scant supply of men, the Americans should cull the best of the crop of husbands. Lord Castlemaine, himself, admired American women æsthetically, and preferred shamelessly to have an American sit next him at dinner. But he understood perfectly well the splendid uncertainties of an American heiress' fortune. It was invariably too well secured to the wife, and the husband sharing it depended too much upon his good behavior. Nevertheless, Lord Castlemaine was willing to proclaim an entirely different set of sentiments, for the pleasure of harassing Lady Susan. Fermor listened to the conversation abstractedly; he was not much interested in Americans.

The father and son were singularly alike, in spite of the gap of thirty

years between them. Lord Castlemaine carried his sixty-five years with courage. He had lived hard, gambled hard, drank much and often, but what is more, had worked hard. He was endowed with great wits and great passions, and he used the one to gratify the other. One of his strongest passions was for the House of Lords. He would leave Newmarket at any moment, when there was a field fight on in the Upper House. And had been known to abandon Monte Carlo in the height of the season, with the luck running his way, to make a series of fierce assaults upon the Gladstone ministry. Lord Castlemaine was by nature a Tory, but, unlike most Tories, he had no expectation of revolutions turning backward, and fought the advancing hosts of the great Demos with his back to the wall. He might, however, be classed with the destructive rather than the constructive statesmen. He had never held office, and professed a disdain for it. As a matter of fact, it had never been offered him. His bitterness of tongue, his pitiless logic, his brilliant invective, his appalling and dangerous candor, made him more feared as an ally than as an opponent. He was still slim, if not sinewy, but the strenuous life had left its mark upon him. In his youth he had been thought to resemble the young Byron. Now his head looked as if he had picked it up on a battlefield.

Fermor, at thirty-five, had the appearance of clean living. He was like, and yet unlike, Lord Castlemaine, and looked to be a stronger, if not a cleverer, man than his father. He was a silent man. Lord Castlemaine had always at his command a torrent of vivid talk; but when Fermor spoke he usually said something. Fermor was obviously the man to do things; Lord Castlemaine was the man to say things. So far, however, thanks to being the son of his father, Fermor had done

nothing.

It was Lord Castlemaine's habit to listen with delight to his sister, Lady Susan's, vaporings, and to encourage her in perpetual scheming for things

which never came to pass. At fortyfive, Lady Susan had married Joshua Battle, a small, meek, and amazingly rich man from Birmingham. Lady Susan's quarterings made up for the fact that Joshua Battle had begun life as an ironmonger, and his money atoned for his having five unmarried daughters when he married Lady Susan. It became the dream of Lady Susan's existence, who was a good stepmother after her own lights, to marry one of the Battle girls to her nephew, Lord Fermor. She had tried him with Jane, Eliza, and Sara Battle, but had failed signally with each. There were two others, still in the hands of governesses and masters, and Lady Susan, undaunted by defeat, confidently reckoned that either Rebecca or Amelia would be the future Countess of Castle-

Meanwhile, Lord Fermor showed no inclination to marry any one. He must marry money, that was well understood. Castlemaine was a poor earldom, as earldoms go, with a big town house and two great country places, which cost a fortune to keep up, and consequently were allowed to go down. King's Lyndon, the finest of these places, lay in one of the beautiful midland counties of England, and had been practically closed for ten years. repairs and refurnishings would have swamped Lord Castlemaine completely, and so it had gone untenanted, except for an occasional month or two, when Lord Castlemaine or Fermor would occupy three or four rooms of the vast house.

Lord Castlemaine was an open and confessed Londoner, unashamed and unafraid. No matter how much King's Lyndon and Longstaff might go to rack and ruin, Castlemaine House was always kept up to the mark. And its dinners were still good, in spite of the fact that, like everything else Lord Castlemaine possessed, the house was covered with mortgages, in which Fermor,

if not cheerfully, had calmly joined. To-night there was no dinner on at Castlemaine House; Lord Castlemaine and Fermor were both dining out, and Lady Susan had stepped in for her daily visitation to her brother and nephew. Finding that Fermor did not pick up the gauge of battle cast at his feet by the mention of Mrs. Bellenden's name, Lady Susan proceeded to "take her grievance to walk," as the

French say.

"The Americans simply own London during the season. Everywhere you go, there they are. Those little women with their insignificant features and their ridiculous little white shoes, and their heads held up in the most impertinent manner, eying their betters. If I had brought up Mr. Battle's daughters to be so bold in their air and carriage, I should consider that I had been most deficient in my duties as a stepmother."

"The American women have indeed a most uncommon carriage of the head, and a quite indescribable courage in their eyes. God knows none of your girls have it," responded Lord Castle-

maine.

"Look," continued Lady Susan, nodding an indignant head at a strip of red carpet spread from the door of the next house across the sidewalk, "I dare say that American man, Seymour and his daughter next door are expecting

royalty this very evening."

That no such honor was intended for the Americans next door was now made plain by the appearance of a handsome empty brougham at the door. Lord Fermor, who had an eye for a horse, leaned over the balcony, with its masses of pale pink hydrangeas, and noticed the clean-limbed, perfectly-matched chestnuts, who stood, motionless, like bronze horses, before the strip of red carpet.

"Remarkably correct," said Lord Castlemaine, his eye glancing over the

whole equipage.

At that moment the door of the great mansion opened, and a lady appeared and walked down the strip of red carpet to the carriage, where the footman held the door open. She was of medium height, but very slender, with a figure of a girl.

When the lady reached the carriage

door, she turned and waved her hand at a gaunt, tall, elderly gentleman standing on the balcony above her, and her face was clearly visible. It was finely cut, with delicate eyebrows, dark eyelashes over black eyes, and thin red lips. She was not a girl—so much was plain—although there was about her the characteristic girlishness of the American type. Her age hovered somewhere about thirty.

The elderly gentleman still lingered in full view on the balcony of the next house. He was as distinctively an American as Lord Castlemaine and Fermor were Englishmen. His air, grave and suave, his tall and slightly stooping figure, were not suggestive of the American plutocrat, but rather of a man who has suffered some hard blows from the iron hand of destiny.

Fermor rose and went down the broad, imposing stairs with Lord Castlemaine, Lady Susan preceding them,

and still haranguing.

"Perhaps," said Fermor to Lord Castlemaine, "you will give me a lift as far as Chester Street, where I am dining. We can save the estate one cab fare, anyhow."

Once inside the brougham, Lord Casdemaine, turning full on Fermor, said:

tlemaine, turning full on Fermor, said: "The estate is in rather better case to-day than it was last week. I saw Stratton this morning, and he says that the whole matter of King's Lyndon was settled yesterday by Seymour, the American, in half an hour. He went down with his daughter, looked over the place, came back, and offered to take it for six months, paying the whole sixty thousand pounds in cash. will clear Longstaff and the town house and leave a balance, and, by the blessing of God, I shall spent next season at Monte Carlo like a gentleman, which I have not been able to do for the past five years. I have no sentiment about King's Lyndon, or any other place, thank God!"

Fermor remained silent, his sombre gray eyes fixed before him. He had a sentiment about King's Lyndon. There he was born, and there were clustered the few faint recollections of his moth-

er, a silent, devoted creature, who had faded out of life as quietly as she had passed through it. He had been a boy of twenty-three in the Guards when he had agreed to join in cutting the entail. Now, twelve years afterward, when he knew what he was doing, he was called upon to fulfill this rash promise. The sale of the place would very much diminish his interest in the county, for Fermor had inherited his father's passion for public life. He had always meant to make it his career, but many things, chiefly lack of money, had prevented. He was, as he grimly reflected, almost as much a victim of caste as those Hindus, who sit starving within sight of grain, which has been polluted for them by the shadow of a half-caste passing over it. Fermor had yearned, from his earliest manhood, to bear a hand in the world's work; to be down among the captains and the shouting. But because it was the tradition of his family he had spent his ten best years in that mock military life, known as service in the Guards.

When he finally resigned he was thirty-three years old, and the one thing for which he was fitted was public life. That seemed beyond his reach on account of Lord Castlemaine's capacity for spending all, and more than, the income of the estates. Fermor's allowance was always in arrears, and the small income which was his independently was hardly enough for him to live upon like a gentleman. Like all the Englishmen of his class, Fermor was perfectly accustomed to the idea of marrying money. But for some reason, scarcely understood by himself, he discovered in himself a ridiculous

disinclination to do so.

And another fantasy, quite as crazy, possessed him; he disliked being courted by women. He had been courted all his life, with the frank courtship which English mothers and daughters bestow upon the heirs of earldoms. And Fermor, although perfectly used to it, disliked it cordially. Flora Bellenden's courtship, although she was a married woman, had been kept up strenuously for more than two years. It was in

vain that Fermor showed her the door; she declined to go out. And he, because of some strange inability to say the brutal word, could not wholly escape from her. Of late, however, a silent change, a revolution had been going on within him; he meant to be free from Flora Bellenden's intangible claim upon him, and free even from Lord Castlemaine.

Lord Castlemaine had a few intermittent impulses of generosity and affection; Fermor had a heart. One of these rare impulses of generosity seized upon Lord Castlemaine, as the two drove along the dusky streets in the

June night.

"I said there would be a balance left over, if the place is sold, as Stratton thinks certain, and it is only fair that you should have a reasonable sum for your expenses, if you wish to stand for Parliament. From what the doctors say about old Whitby, there will be a vacancy pretty soon in the division."

Fermor, surprised and touched, turned to Lord Castlemaine and said:

"Thank you."

It was not much, after all, but it was more than he expected. It moved both of them so much that, like true-born Britons, they scurried away from the subject by mutual consent.

"How do you suppose the story leaked out about the lease of King's

Lyndon?" asked Fermor.

"Through a woman, of course; they have a devilish ingenuity for finding out and betraying secrets. That is to say all the sex, except your Aunt Susan. Her mind leaks like a sieve, but she couldn't find out anything to save her life. She has not yet discovered that none of Joshua Battle's daughters will ever be Countess of Castlemaine. Nevertheless, my boy, you have got to marry money."

Soon they had reached Chester Street; the brougham pulled up, and Lord Fermor got out. Lord Castlemaine gave no indication that he knew Fermor was going to Mrs. Bellenden's house to dinner. But there was a cheerful grin upon his countenance

when he nodded to Fermor and drove off.

CHAPTER II.

There was a big dinner on at the prime minister's, and when Lord Castlemaine entered the first of the three great drawing-rooms, it seemed quite full of persons. He was among the last arrivals, and the hostess immediately begun apportioning the ladies to the gentlemen who were to take them down to dinner. Lord Castlemaine, on whom was bestowed a dowager duchess, shaped like a kettle, caught the sound of a name behind him; Madame Fontarini, whom Marsac, one of the secretaries of the French embassy, was invited to hand down. She proved to be the lady of the handsome brough-

Lord Castlemaine had a photographic mind, and while listening with a grin to the duchess' artless prattle, as they moved down the splendid stairway, he was rapidly assembling enough facts to identify Madame Fontarini. It was one of the best names in Roman society, belonging to the "Black" section. There was a Cardinal Fontarini, who had a nephew, Pietro, a scamp of the first water, and said to be the handsomest young man in Rome. Ten or twelve years before this, Pietro had married a young American girl with a great The possession of money fortune. made Pietro Fontarini a worse man than ever before, and, after a stormy career of a few years, which narrowly verged on crime, he died of his excesses. Lord Castlemaine never remembered to have heard the name of Fontarini's wife mentioned since her husband's death, but he thought the chances were that this Madame Fontarini was the lady in question. was rather pleased when he found his left-hand neighbor at the long and glittering table to be her.

Lord Castlemaine was a connoisseur in feminine beauty, as well as in horses, although no woman could acquire the ascendency over him, any more than could the finest steed of Araby. One comprehensive glance at Madame Fon-

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tarini showed that she could stand the closest inspection.

She was by no means the handsomest woman present, but unquestionably the most distinguished in appearance. With her dark hair, white skin, and delicately cut features, she looked like a cameo in an exhibition of terra-cotta busts. Her filmy white gown, with its billows of lace, made the other women, in satins and velvets, look as if they were upholstered.

Before he had finished his soup, he began a conversation with her. Circumstances favored him, for the duchess was frankly afraid of him, and openly preferred the ambassador on her left.

"I think we are neighbors," said Lord Castlemaine.

"Yes," responded Madame Fontarini, turning upon him her large, clear, dark gaze. "I have known you by sight ever since we took our London house." Then she added, smiling: "And also by name. You are Lord Castlemaine."

"And you are Madame Fontarini," said Lord Castlemaine. "I knew a cardinal of that name in Rome years ago."
"He was my husband's uncle," re-

plied Madame Fontarini quietly.
"I always liked the Romans, but I own I never could understand them," continued Lord Castlemaine, shying

away from the personal note.

"No one can except a Roman," answered Madame Fontarini quietly. "I spent six years of my married life in Italy. I knew the Italians little in the beginning; I knew them still less when I lett. Perhaps it is because I am an American that I understand the Romans so little, or any of the Italians, for that matter.

"I see you know European life well; you are among the Americans who pay us the compliment of preferring to live among us."

"Pray acquit me of the bad taste of preferring any other country to my own," replied Madame Fontarini, softly smiling. "My father's affairs have made it necessary for many years past that we should live abroad. We are

established in England for the rest of our lives, as far as we can now see, and we hope and expect to like it, but we do not belong to the class of voluntarily expatriated Americans. It is my father's particular quarrel with Fate that we cannot live in America, so we have determined to make the best of our enforced residence in Eng-

land."

Then her neighbor, Marsac, claimed her attention. Marsac was a handsome, vivacious Frenchman, who had made his way, by wit and good sense, from the ranks of working journalists in Paris to be secretary of the embassy at London. He was evidently charmed with Madame Fontarini, and her smiles and soft laughter showed that she was not insensible to his brilliant attractions. It was a quarter of an hour before Lord Castlemaine had an opportunity to strike into the conversation again. Marsac and Madame Fontarini were discussing country life in England, and Madame Fontarini turned to Lord Castlemaine.

"It is all changed," he said. "Country life in England was much better when the late queen was quarreling with Sir Robert Peel, and people waited for good weather to cross the Channel. Then, the great houses were occupied all the year round, except for the two months during the season. Now the more great houses there are in a given locality, the worse off it is for society. Half the people in England are off yachting or on the Continent, or in America, or South Africa. The other half depend upon London to furnish them with guests for week-end parties. For my part, I fly in the face of all tradition, and say London is the place, after all."

"Yes," put in Marsac, "London is England, after all, but all of you have not yet waked up to the fact.'

"I have," replied Lord Castlemaine, laughing. "London is the only place in England where men are found in appreciable numbers."
"I have not noticed any lack of

them," said Madame Fontarini.

"Of course not," answered Lord Cas-

tlemaine gallantly. "Where the bee sucks, etc.; but I predict you will like the town better than the country in the end."

"Pray," said Marsac, "do not disparage country life to Madame Fontarini, who has just been telling me of the pleasure she expects in the country house which her father, Mr. Seymour, has leased. I was begging her for an invitation to visit her as soon as she is established as chatelaine."

"Yes, Mr. Seymour has done me the favor to lease a place of mine, King's Lyndon. I wish him joy of it," said Lord Castlemaine, smiling, to Madame Fontarini. "And, in particular, I don't wish, in case the place is given up, that it shall be restored to me in exactly the condition in which I let him

have it."

Fermor's adventures Meanwhile, were quite different from Lord Castlemaine's. He had arrived in Chester Street ten minutes in advance of the time, and strolled down a side street where he could not be seen from Mrs. Bellenden's window. So Fermor determined that she should not see him,

if he could help it.

As he walked around the square, he saw in advance of him another man like himself marking time before dinner. It was Ashburton, his best, and, Fermor thought sometimes, his only friend. They had been in the Guards together twelve years before. Ashburton had exchanged into a line regiment, alleging that he could not afford the Guards, as his mother and sisters had but a scanty income. Fermor had reckoned this conduct on Ashburton's part to be one of heroic virture, and ever afterward felt himself honored by Ashburton's friendship. During a long service in India, Ashburton had kept up an intermittent correspondence with Fermor. Then suddenly Ashburton inherited a considerable fortune. mother was dead, his sisters married, and he resigned from the army. He kept modest chambers in London, frequented the "Rag," and did nothing, so far as Fermor knew, in the way of spending his money.

As the two men caught sight of each other at the same moment, Ashburton pulled out his watch.

"Twenty-two minutes past," he said. "We have eight minutes more."

"I can stand the delay," said Fer-

"Will you be going to the reception at Petersham House to-night?" Ashburton asked Fermor.

"Yes. If you are there we can walk back together. Like you, I fancy the quiet streets at night."

Then Fermor turned away, and in three minutes was bowing over Mrs. Bellenden's hand in her drawing-room.

She was very tall and fair, and had been the beauty of her season, and might have been a beauty still but for the obvious artificiality of her goldcolored hair, her penciled eyebrows, and the touch of rouge upon her cheek. All of which are things that cannot be con-

Actually Flora Bellenden was as much in love with Fermor as a woman of her kind can be in love with a man. She admired his long, graceful body, his agreeable voice, the little touch of coolness about him in all he said and did. He interested her, and piqued her, and infuriated her; and without him she was bored.

Half a dozen people witnessed Mrs. Bellenden's greeting to Fermor. There was in it an air of proprietorship which chagrined him infinitely; he was conscious of a shade of amusement upon

the faces of the other guests.

When dinner was over, most of the party were going to the great crush following the prime minister's dinner at Petersham House. Mrs. Bellenden proposed a party of four, of which Fermor was to be one, in her coach. Fermor skillfully escaped from this arrangement, and slipped off in a hansom. His mind was full of things which did not refer to Flora Bellenden, or any other woman. The few words spoken by Lord Castlemaine with regard to standing for the division in Midlandshire had fired Fermor's blood. It was like showing the game to a pointer.

CHAPTER III.

Fermor's head was full of these thoughts when he came to the door of Petersham House. It was splendidly illuminated, and the great staircase was blocked with half London in gala dress. In the midst of the crowd, the lights, and the gorgeousness, the thought that he had broken his chains was still in Fermor's mind, and gave a new animation to his somewhat cold and impassive face. He reached his hostess, paid her the compliments of the evening, and then made his way through the crowded rooms, speaking to acquaintances right and left.

Mrs. Bellenden, he knew, had arrived, and in common courtesy he must speak to her some time during the evening. An hour passed, however, before he began to look for her. Then he caught sight of her tall figure at the farther end of the three superb drawing-rooms. He felt no unwillingness at going to her, because he was sure that in some way he could make his new resolve known to her and believed

by her.

When he had got within a few feet of her, he noticed, standing close by, the lady of the white gown and silver shoes, whom he had seen get into the carriage earlier in the evening. She was in front of an open window, her graceful head and delicate contours outlined against the dark foliage of a tree that was almost pushing its way into the opening. Again Fermor had the feeling of reminiscence, of a vague, unplaced memory of her. As at dinner, Madame Fontarini's surroundings accented her soft and pensive beauty. She was speaking with Marsac and his wife, an agreeable Frenchwoman, and her air was exquisitely gracious. From Madame Fontarini Fermor glanced toward Mrs. Bellenden.

Fermor, with a bow and smile, as much as to say: "You are too much engaged for me to intrude myself," turned and spoke to Marsac and Madame Marsac. They were very cordial, and Fermor found himself in the same group with his next-door neighbor.

At her first words he perceived that she was an American. Her accent, although perfectly correct, had the subtle transatlantic difference, so had her conversation. The group talked together for a few minutes, closely watched by Mrs. Bellenden. Seeing that Fermor was in no hurry to come to her, she dismissed her court, and walked up to him. She knew Marsac, as she knew everybody in London, and to him immediately began:

"You have treated me shamefully of late. You have not once been to me on Sunday, and I am thinking of cutting you out of my motoring party to

Richmond next week."

Marsac, who was the embodiment of gentlemanly impudence, replied, smiling:

ing:
"Thanks, Mrs. Bellenden, but I did
not know that I was in your motoring

party."

Instantly a kind of chill fell upon the group, which had been talking so pleasantly before. Madame Fontarini moved off, shaking hands with Madame Marsac, whom she asked to luncheon with her the next Tuesday, and, bowing gracefully to Marsac and Fermor.

Mrs. Bellenden advanced a step, and attempted to engage Marsac in conversation. She liked to be seen talking with him, as he was reckoned one of the great wits of the diplomatic corps. But Marsac, with perfectly well-bred diplomacy, slipped off, after giving her a parting shot, which might be delicate trifling or else scathing impertinence. Mrs. Bellenden chose to take it as the latter.

"Did you notice," she asked in an angry whisper of Fermor, "Marsac's insolence to me?"

"Yes," answered Fermor calmly, "and I think you provoked it."

"And possibly deserved it; you imply as much."

Fermor bowed without speaking.

Anger generally turns women into fools, and this was the case with Mrs. Bellenden at that moment.

"I think," she said, "under the circumstances you might have indicated to Marsac that he cannot address me in that manner with impunity."

"I recognize no such obligation as

you imply.

The blood poured into Flora Bellenden's face, under the rouge upon her cheeks.

"Do you mean—" she stammered.
"Exactly what I say," answered Fermor.

There was a pause, and the other persons in the room, glancing toward the two, saw that Mrs. Bellenden was red and Fermor pale.

"Will you come to me to-morrow morning?" she asked hurriedly.

"I beg to be excused," replied Fer-

mor.

"I have never had such a request refused before by any man," said Mrs. Bellenden, after a moment.

Fermor made no answer; but, bow-

ing, walked off.

One person present had observed and understood the little scene between Fermor and Mrs. Bellenden, which seemed a mere casual conversation. This was Lord Castlemaine, who said to himself, as he glanced at Flora Bellenden's face, angry and handsome:

"Fermor will have a reckoning yet with Mrs. Bellenden. God forgives, and men forget, but women never do

either."

There was a laughing devil in Lord Castlemaine's eye as Fermor passed him, which reënforced Fermor's resolution, already strong, to break forever with Flora Bellenden. He longed to get out of the crowded and heated rooms into the chill fresh air of the night, and to have the companionship of a man like Ashburton, single-minded and simple-hearted. He caught sight of Ashburton in the crowd, and signaled to him, and the two men left at the same time.

The night was sharp, for June, and they struck off at a rapid gait through

the quiet streets.

"Come, my boy," said Ashburton at last, "you are going too fast for me. Let's halt a while."

Fermor stood still, and looked medi-

tatively down upon the ground, his

hands in his pockets.

"I did not know I was racing," he said. "The truth is, I feel a sense of exhilaration, that a man naturally takes There will probably out in walking. be a by-election in Midlandshire within a month, and I shall stand for Parliament. You know my desire has always been to go into public life, but I have not had the money, or have had other uses for it. Now the chance has come, after ten of my best years are

gone.

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"Yours is only the average loss of a man's life," replied Ashburton. "Mine is much greater. I knew very well what to do with my life when I had a small allowance, and a mother and sisters who needed help. Then, all at once, a lot of money came to me, and those who had just claims on me no longer needed help. I think I was free-handed enough, but I was not such a fool as to begin the wholesale demoralization of all the young men in my family, by handing them out money. I tried to help them judiciously. I don't think any of my gifts hurt them. But then came the great question: After doing for others what to do for myself. I wish to do, not to be. It is said of Christ that He went about doing good, not merely being good. I found I could join the Third Order of St. Francis and yet remain in the world. For I am no ascetic, no dreamer, not the man to dig in a monastery garden. I like my club, I wish to live like a gentleman, though without extravagance, and to put me in a cassock would be to turn me into a hypocrite. A fortnight ago I made my resolve. I am now a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, and I have something to do.

They resumed their walk together, talking freely; a thing rare with both of them. Fifteen minutes brought them to the open space of Queen's Gate. Ashburton, with a brief "good night," turned into one of the small side streets, while Fermor went on to the great houses dark and massive in the night

of shadows and moonlight.

He let himself into the great dark house, and by the dim light burning in the halls and passages, made his way to the smoking room in the back. There he found Lord Castlemaine. It was an unwelcome jar in Fermor's present mood; he was the farthest man on earth removed from Ashburton.

Lord Castlemaine, stretched out on the broad leather lounge, was watching the blue wreaths of smoke from a

strong cigar.

"I am thinking," he said, "of starting a missionary society to show women how to make the best of their beauty, and the least of their ugliness. This fashion of dyed hair among women is enough to drive any man into volun-tary celibacy like St. Paul."

Fermor said nothing, but lighted an-

other cigarette.

"You know how one of the American comic journals described the modern woman: 'A woman of sixty, who looks fifty; who thinks she is forty; dresses like she is thirty, and acts like she is twenty.' This exactly describes one-half the women I saw to-night."

"Most Americans are amusing," said Fermor, thinking this a safe and gen-

eral proposition.

"I sat next one to-night at dinner, who could not be called amusing, but who was most interesting. Oddly enough, she turned out to be the daughter of Seymour, who lives in the next house, and who in God's good time I hope will become the purchaser of King's Lyndon. She is the lady we saw get into the carriage this evening." Fermor recalled her with faint in-

terest, his mind being on other things. "She is Madame Fontarini. Did you ever hear, in Rome, of that Pietro Fontarini, nephew of the cardinal, and who

was known as a bad hat from the be-

ginning?"
"Yes," answered Fermor, "I recolsix or seven years ago, hearing of a frightful thing about Pietro Fontarini, and I also now recall that his wife was an American. There was a boy, an only child, about five years old. One day during Madame Fontarini's absence, Fontarini took the child out and was gone several hours. The weather was bad, and when the little fellow came back he had a violent chill, and died within a week. It turned out that Fontarini had him the whole afternoon, driving up and down the Pincio in an open carriage with Sacco, the dancer, and himself. That was too much for Roman society, and Fontarini was dé-

classé after that."

"I recall it all now," said Lord Castlemaine. "Fontarini was hissed in the theatre, and Sacco was obliged to leave Rome. Fontarini's uncle, the cardinal, cut him dead in public, and directed his servants not to let him in the house. Fontarini, luckily, is dead, and it seems a pity he was ever born. Madame Fontarini has evidently returned to her father, and appears to be an only child. She has a great deal of charm and dignity. It occurred to me to-night she would make an admirable Countess of Castlemaine."

"For yourself? Let me know the date, and I will cheerfully do the hand-some thing, and will be best man."

"Oh, Lord, no! I was thinking of

vou."

"But I have often heard you declare that American heiresses were a very

risky investment.'

"Possibly; but I am acting the part of a paternal pelican toward you. At all events, I shall cultivate the father, as well as the daughter, and, if I meet him, I shall ask him to call. Well, good night. Let me know to-morrow morning whether you are inclined to enter the running with Madame Fontarini."

CHAPTER IV.

The next morning was hot and bright. Lord Castlemaine was out on foot; he liked his morning stroll in the parks, as much as Doctor Johnson loved his walk down the Strand.

Never had Lord Castlemaine seen more animation in the space between Queen's Gate and Apsley House than on this June morning. All smart London seemed to be there. At every turn Lord Castlemaine met acquaintances who congratulated him on his looks; for no man in London carried sixty-five years better than he. A monocle was still good enough for him, and as his eyes traveled over the crowd, he noticed a lady and gentleman sitting on a bench together, near Albert Gate. They were his neighbors, Madame Fontarini and her father, Mr. Seymour. Lord Castlemaine at once made his way toward them, and greeted her in his most charming manner. "And this, I believe, is Mr. Seymour," he said, offering his hand to Seymour. "I think we may claim acquaintanceship through our friend Stratton."

Seymour shook hands courteously, and Lord Castlemaine, without waiting for an invitation, seated himself on the other side of Madame Fontarini.

He had been talking with his newfound acquaintances quite half an hour, when he caught sight of Fermor walking briskly past.

"May I introduce my son, Lord Fermor?" he asked of Madame Fontarini.

And without waiting for permission, or for her to say that she already knew his son, he beckoned to Fermor, who advanced and was introduced.

The group stood talking in the bright noontime, all blue and gold. Fermor, glancing toward the roadway, saw a lady walking her horse with her groom behind. It was Mrs. Bellenden. Fermor could have left the group at any moment, but Madame Fontarini's soft charm, the delicate but distinct difference between her and the English woman were not lost on him. He felt very much inclined to linger, and when he saw Mrs. Bellenden his inclination became a resolve. He understood well enough the rules of American customs, by which a man may show an American woman any degree of attention he likes, without compromising her, or committing himself. This, however, was not in the least understood by Mrs. Bellenden, and conviction shot into her mind, when she saw Fermor and Madame Fontarini walking in advance through the cool green park, followed by Lord Castlemaine and Seymour.

Mrs. Bellenden was tolerably well-

informed concerning Seymour and his daughter, as her information to Lady Susan Battle had indicated. She now understood, or thought she understood, the whole thing. It was this American with her millions, her calm and assured air in speaking to men, her distinctive toilets, who had beguiled Fermor. Mrs. Bellenden hated all Americans, and the sight of Fermor walking with Madame Fontarini, who took it, as Mrs. Bellenden thought, in a ridiculously cool manner, made her hate them all the more, as a woman can hate.

Another person was surprised and annoyed at the sight. This was Lady Susan Battle, who, from the balcony of her house, saw Fermor accompany Madame Fontarini to her own door.

The group in the street separated, Seymour and his daughter going into their own house, while Lord Castlemaine and Fermor entered Castlemaine House. A part of the unspoken gratitude which Fermor felt for his father, for offering him a little money, consisted in going home and lunching with him.

The father and son went together upstairs to the drawing-room. The day had grown hotter and brighter, and the balcony, cool and shady, was a pleasant place. Lord Castlemaine picked up a newspaper which lay on the table, while Fermor took up one of the quarterlies. After five minutes' reading, Lord Castlemaine, laying down his paper, said to Fermor quietly, as if continuing their former conversation:

"It is the best marriage that could be arranged for you. The lady is charming, the fortune is large, and if King's Lyndon is a part of the arrangement, it will more than maintain the family interest in Midlandshire."

Fermor, closing his magazine, lighted a cigarette, but said nothing. If any one had told him at sunrise that before night he would meet a woman who would interest him, he would have gibed at the notion. He thought he had had enough of the feminine sex to last him a considerable time. But just as Lord Castlemaine had unexpectedly changed front on the subject of Amer-

ican heiresses, since meeting Theodora Fontarini, so with Fermor, the thought of another feminine element in his life did not altogether displease him. Nothing more was said, and they sat reading on the balcony for half an hour. Then from the Seymours' house came the soft strains of a violin, touched by the delicate, skillful bow hand of a woman. Lord Castlemaine listened closely—he was no mean judge of music, and when the violin playing ceased, he looked significantly at Fermor, who glanced away, as if not observing the music; he had heard every note.

Theodora, on going upstairs, entered the first of the three great drawing-rooms, which made a long vista of splendor. The lofty room was cool and redolent with flowers placed lavishly about it. Madame Fontarini seated herself in an armchair in front of the glass door that opened upon the balcony; shaded like those of its neighbors, and a riot of color with its blooming plants.

She gazed into the sunny street, but her brooding eyes saw nothing. A change, faint, indeed, but noticeable, seemed to have come into her life during those few weeks in England, and to-day she recognized it for the first time. At last, her tragic past seemed to be melting a little in that twilight of forgetfulness which is on the horizon of every human life.

Although Theodora had quickly and rashly yielded to the soft seduction of love for the handsomest Roman of them all, common sense and her own integrity of soul soon showed her Pietro Fontarini as he really was. No woman's love could survive that revelation. Pride and native dignity kept Theodora silent under outrages that an older and more experienced woman would have made Pietro pay for dearly.

When her child was born, the young mother of nineteen thought that compensation had at last come to her. The boy was noble-minded like his mother, but the beautiful image of his father. But the thought that he might resemble Pietro in other ways went like a knife

to the heart of Theodora. And then, overwhelmed with remorse, and considering it a crime to suspect a child of such latent iniquity, she would clasp him in her arms and shower caresses upon him. These things and the agony of the child's death had haunted her continually for six years past, and only lately, since she had come to England, had she been able to withdraw her mind enough from them to take any interest in the world around her. During all those years of sadness her father's tenderness and patience had never failed. And it was for him that Madame Fontarini had aroused herself at last from the torpor of grief, after the child's death, and had taken up her life at the point it had been dropped when she entered upon those stormy years with Pietro Fontarini.

drifted dreamily These things through Theodora's mind, as she sat still and silent, her inward gaze upon herself. Then, strangely enough, she found herself thinking of other things; of the present, even of the future. Being all a woman, she was conscious of Lord Castlemaine's open admiration and marked attention to her, and knowing well who and what he was, her woman's vanity was pleased; and Fermor-Madame Fontarini could not recall when she had met a man who interested her and pleased her so much upon a casual meeting. Even after that chance encounter the night before at Petersham House she would have recognized him anywhere. She was actually speculating upon whether Fermor would call upon her or not, when her reverie was broken by her father's step behind her, and Seymour saying:

"My dear, I have heard that Signor Barotti's little boy is ill, and I have

promised to go to see him."

Theodora took this as a matter of course, for her father had a passion

for works of charity.

At five o'clock Seymour had not returned, and Madame Fontarini went alone for her drive in the park. The afternoon was glorious, and all gay London seemed to have poured itself into the park. There was a blockade

of carriages from Albert Gate to the Achilles statue, and the crowd of welldressed men and women, sitting in the chairs or leaning over the railing, enjoyed the sight at close quarters of all the carriage beauty of London.

Madame Fontarini, in her well-turned-out victoria and pair, bore the scrutiny calmly. She was accustomed to the observation, and even to the free remarks, of a Roman crowd, and the London multitude was nothing to that. So great was the number of carriages out that the blockade included those that were going as well as those that were coming. And Madame Fontarini presently found her carriage wheels touching those of a lady, whom she instantly recognized as the Marsacs' acquaintance, Mrs. Bellenden, whom she had seen at Petersham House.

Theodora felt a shock of surprise, and a sudden consciousness that this handsome, spectacular woman was an enemy. She was on her mettle, and when the carriage ahead of her moved, and her coachman did not at once proceed, she was enough mistress of herself to give no order to him. But she was glad when she was out of the reach of Mrs. Bellenden's eyes.

It was after seven o'clock before Theodora returned home. No word had been received from Mr. Seymour. This somewhat disturbed her. knew her father's passion for doing good, and it had happened more than once, that going to see some sick person, he had remained the night, and even several nights. She dressed for dinner, and sat down alone to the table in the gorgeous dining room. After dinner she went up into the dusky drawing-room. Declining to have the lamps lighted, she sat alone in the twilight. It was quite nine o'clock, and the light was fading out of the eastern sky, when a gentleman was announced at the door of the drawing-room, Major Ashburton. Theodora rose as he advanced, and quickly perceived that his air and manner were those of a man of the world, and that, though he was plain and short, he was far from insignificant.

"Allow me to introduce myself as Major Ashburton, and this, I believe, is Madame Fontarini," he said.

Madame Fontarini bowed, and asked Ashburton to have a seat, which he

took, and continued:

"I have come with a message from Mr. Seymour. He desired me to say that, going to the lodgings of Barotti, the music master, he found the boy, Nicolo, had developed scarlet fever. The nurse, whom Barotti had hired, deserted the boy, and Mr. Seymour felt that his services were needed on the spot. He remained, therefore, until the doctor and nurse were secured by telephone. But, of course, after having been several hours in the room with the boy, Mr. Seymour is in quarantine. I spoke with him from the door, as I was not allowed to enter the room, and he desires me to say to you with his love that he would communicate with you every day, and would return as soon as it was safe to do so."

"I was afraid of something of the sort," cried Theodora, "it is so like

my father."

"Meanwhile," continued Ashburton, "Mr. Seymour directs that his man shall put up some clothes and other things desired, and I will take them in the cab which is waiting."
"Thank you very much," replied The-

odora.

She rang the bell, and, sending for Mr. Seymour's valet, ordered him to put up the necessary articles, and take them down to the cab. Then she re-

turned to Ashburton.

"It is very good of you, too," she said, smiling, "to do so much. I think we would all help Signor Barotti, or any one else in a like emergency. But some people, like my father, seem to have the knack of finding out emergencies."

To this Ashburton said nothing. He was a natural celibate, and not much interested in women, but Madame Fontarini appealed to him as rather finer and stronger than the average woman. Besides, she was of a type so different from the English woman, that she attracted notice like an unusual flower in a garden. Ashburton's next remark, however, was not of a poetic sort.

"There is an immense deal of scar-let fever about," he said. "I have heard of a dozen cases within the last week."

Madame Fontarini was a little puzzled. Was this gentleman a doctor? She remembered that army surgeons were in England given military titles.

"Perhaps your profession," she said, "brings you in the way of finding out about these things.

"My profession is, or was, in the line of the army," replied Ashburton.

Madame Fontarini smiled with a

pretty air of knowing something which her companion did not wish her to find

"I understand," she said. "You are like my father, one of those men who like to do good, and search for occa-

Ashburton's face flushed crimson up to the roots of his sandy hair. truth, he hated to be found out.

Then Tompkins, Mr. Seymour's valet, passed down the stairs, carrying his master's portmanteau. Madame Fontarini, going to a vase of roses, took from it three beautiful red roses.

"Give this one to my father with my love," she said, smiling, and handing one to Ashburton. "And this one with my dear love, and the third one with

my dearest love."

Ashburton's shrewd eyes expressed surprise. He had never known an Engglish daughter on quite these terms of affectionate intimacy with her father which Theodora's words suggested. He bowed himself out, and Theodora for the second time that day felt a sensation of interest and admiration concerning a man.

CHAPTER V.

Several days passed, and Seymour remained absent, but Theodora received a letter from him every day.

In passing to and from her carriage in the afternoons and evenings, and in going for her morning walk in the park, Theodora was often seen by her neighbors, including Fermor. Once or twice they met in the street and talked for a few minutes, but as Fermor had not seen fit to avail himself of Seymour's cordial American invitation to call, Theodora did not linger long in

his company.

However, one rainy afternoon, during the week of Seymour's absence, Fermor made up his mind to pay a visit of ceremony to Madame Fontarini. But just as he made his resolve, he saw Lord Castlemaine wending his way next door. And Fermor promptly concluded to wait until he should see his father emerge from Madame Fontarini's door.

Theodora, sitting at her solitary tea table, in the vast suite of drawing-rooms, watched the gray rain come down in sheets. A longing was in her heart for companionship, and it was with a sensation of pleasure she heard Lord Castlemaine announced. He entered, bringing with him the atmosphere of strength, power, and interest

which were ever his own.

"I meant to call long before," he said, "but there is an attorney in town by the name of Stratton who seems to own me as Mephistopheles owned Faust. However, to-day I claimed my freedom, and determined to come in

and pay my respects to you."

Then Madame Fontarini explained that her father was not at home, and went on, as a matter of course, to tell the story of Barotti's stricken child.

"In my youth," said Lord Castlemaine, receiving his first cup of tea, "nobody ever heard of these incursions upon the poor, and we didn't know such a place as the East End existed. Now it is something like the days of John Wesley. I shouldn't be surprised to see my son, Fermor, going around barefooted in a brown habit with a straw rope around his waist."

"Has Lord Fermor any ascetic leanings?" asked Theodora in good faith. "Oh, Lord, no! Not that ever I heard of; only this is the age of ex-

tremists, and of everybody meddling with everybody else's business." Just then the door was opened, and Marsac was announced. He seated himself, demanded tea and silence, while he told a thrilling tale.

"This afternoon I demanded liberty of my chief, who would have kept me at the embassy. I revolted when Madame Marsac would have shut me up in a brougham, and taken me around to pay duty visits. I said: 'No, I go to Madame Fontarini to pour out my soul to her.' Madame Marsac accepted this meekly, seeing a furious determination in my eye. I have met an American—not an Anglo-American or Franco-American, or any other hyphenated sort—but the unadulterated American."

"How lucky!" murmured Theodora.

"It was in the train coming up from Brighton yesterday. A young man got in, unmistakably American. The young man, Wyndham, I soon found out was a journalist, and as I have always yearned after my early profession, I began to talk with him. He was traveling in Europe, with oceans of money to spend. The rich journalist, you know, is also peculiar to America. I had never understood fully what is called the Oriental spaciousness of the American mind, until I talked with Wyndham."

"I am always delighted to hear my country praised," said Theodora.

"Living in England is the crumpled rose leaf in your fate," remarked Lord Castlemaine.

"I was so fascinated," continued Marsac, "with Wyndham, that I gave him my card. He handed me his in return. He is stopping at one of the swellest London hotels. He has, it seems, very good letters of introduction, and he has been going around to some excellent dinners."

"I should like very much to know my interesting compatriot," said Madame Fontarini. "I should be glad if

he would call to see me."

"What an amusing people you are, after all," cried Lord Castlemaine. "You never saw or heard of this person before, yet, with your American social recklessness, you are ready to rush into an acquaintance with him.

Marsac, of course, is an outlaw, and prides himself on knowing all the knife grinders and rat catchers in town."

The visit of Lord Castlemaine and Marsac was long and agreeable, and when Lord Castlemaine rose to leave, he insisted that Marsac should go, too, declaring he dare not leave his reputation in Marsac's hands. The two went down the staircase, arm in arm, laughing and talking to each other. Madame Fontarini's parting injunction to Marsac was to be sure and bring Wyndham to call.

The mental exhilaration produced by the conversation with two such men as Lord Castlemaine and Marsac lifted Theodora out of her mood of loneliness and despondency. Taking up her violin, she played soft little airs upon it, as she walked up and down the large

room.

The afternoon was closing in, and a little fire on the hearth threw a red light upon her graceful figure and trailing gown. She did not hear, upon the thickly carpeted stair, the step of the footman, who escorted Lord Fermor to the door; nor did she even hear the first announcement of his name. Fermor had a good view of her for half a minute, as she stood drawing her bow, with a long, graceful motion, over the strings, making a delicate little melody. When she saw him, however, she showed no surprise; but, laying down her violin, greeted him with perfect ease.

He recognized instantly that Madame Fontarini, composed and unaffected, was neither embarrassed nor elated at his visit. She offered him a cup of tea, and Fermor, for the first time in his life, felt himself entirely at ease when alone with a lady who might consider

him a desirable parti.

"Lord Castlemaine was kind enough to call to see me this afternoon," said

Theodora.

"So I know," replied Fermor, "I was in the act of coming myself when I saw my father leaving the house, and as I did not wish to have a collision, I postponed my visit until his was over."

Something in the atmosphere and soft firelight, the vast, silent house, made their conversation grow personal and almost intimate from the beginning. Lord Fermor spoke of King's Lyndon, saying:

"I am glad to know that the place will be in the hands of persons who will maintain it as it should be. It has been a regret to me to see it going to rack and ruin, and it was not in my

father's power to restore it."

"I was charmed with the place when I saw it," she said. "My father, of course, insisted that I should see it before he leased it. So I went down with him, and we spent the day there."

"Wonderful are American fathers,"

thought Fermor.

"I believe in restoration, but not changes," continued Madame Fontarini. "We concluded to live, ourselves, in the west wing. There is a charming little drawing-room opening on the terrace, and I determined that it should be mine. Everything in it pleased me, and I shall have it restored exactly as it was originally."

"That was my mother's morning room," answered Fermor. "She died when I was a little chap, only five years old. And my only recollection of her is sitting in that room, and walking up and down the terrace holding me by the hand. King's Lyndon came to us through my mother. Longstaff, our other place, is only four miles off, so I shall ask to have the privilege of paying my respects to you when you are established at King's Lyndon."

"It will give my father and myself much pleasure, and I hope we shall be

good neighbors."

Then the conversation turned upon Rome. Theodora spoke readily in general terms of Roman life, but sedulously avoided any allusion to her own unhappy Roman experience. Fermor, pleased and soothed, as men are by a sympathetic woman, was beginning to feel that Lord Castlemaine's suggestion concerning Madame Fontarini was far from preposterous. He was wearied and skeptical, with what, in his own life, women had called their love for

him, and thought when he married he would rather like the arrangement to be one of friendship and suitability.

Madame Fontarini, with her attraction of person and fortune, would have a large choice in marriage. And Fermor, while listening to her tea-table talk, so different from the usual kind, was thinking it was certainly much more flattering to be chosen from others by a woman like Madame Fontarini than to become the quarry of a man-chasing mother and daughter. In the midst of their quiet talk fell a bomb.

"Will you pardon me for asking," said Madame Fontarini, "if the lady with whom I saw you talking at Petersham House is Mrs. Bellenden of Ches-

ter Street?"

"Yes," he answered briefly.

"I meant to ask the question of Monsieur Marsac," said Theodora, with a frank smile, "but forgot it. I have met Mrs. Bellenden several times in driving, and she has always stared at me, I think most disagreeably. You may imagine my surprise when to-day she left cards upon me. I was not at home, and did not see her, but I questioned the servant, and there is no doubt the visit was meant for me. I shall leave my card on her, but I don't intend to begin a visiting acquaintance with Mrs. Bellenden. Her air is very insolent."

Fermor remained silent, and Madame Fontarini continued, laughing as she

spoke:

"I see you are quite shocked at my mentioning Mrs. Bellenden's name. Nobody ever mentions names in England, but remember I am an American and have been in England only a little while, and many things are still strange

to me."

Fermor grasped in an instant Mrs. Bellenden's motive, and the mere fact that Madame Fontarini lived in the next house to Castlemaine House, and would preside over King's Lyndon, certainly for the next six months, was enough to start rumors which Mrs. Bellenden had heard or surmised. It was hateful to him that he could not keep wholly clear of Flora Bellenden. He felt a strong desire to warn Ma- scandalous length of time.

dame Fontarini against Mrs. Bellenden, but he, of all men, could least do that. The silence was becoming awkward, when the sound of a cab stopping at the door and a step upon the pavement were heard.

"That is my father!" cried Theodora, rising and going to the window. "Major Ashburton is with him. You may know," she said, turning to Fermor, who had risen also, "he has been just as much interested in Barotti's child as

my father."

Nothing could surprise Fermor any more that afternoon, not even the deeply affectionate greeting between Madame Fontarini and her father, who entered the drawing-room as Fermor was about to leave it.

"I am delighted to see you," cried Seymour, shaking hands warmly with Fermor. "We are neighbors not only in town, but shall be in the country."

And then, before he could carry out his intention of introducing Ashburton to Fermor, the two men greeted each

other like old friends.

"Come," cried Theodora to her fa-ther and Ashburton, whom she was sincerely glad to see, "let me give you some tea, and hear all about Barotti's boy and your own heroism. Papa, I have had a levee this afternoon. Lord Castlemaine first, and then Monsieur Marsac, Lord Fermor, Major Ashburton, and yourself."

"You really must remain," said Seymour in his hearty American way to Fermor. And he, for the first time in his life, sat down again, after having made his adieux. Seymour, and Theodora did most of the talking. Ashburton was naturally a silent man; Fermor's brain was still busy with the problem of Mrs. Bellenden's visit.

Quite half an hour passed, from the time Seymour and Ashburton arrived, until Fermor and Ashburton departed

together.

A family Vidocq, in the person of Lady Susan Battle, had seen from her own drawing-room window Fermor enter the Seymour house and leave it, after what Lady Susan considered a

CHAPTER VI.

It was now late in June, and the season gained impetus as it rushed toward its conclusion.

Theodora and her father were eager to get away from town, but King's Lyndon had been suffered to fall into such decay that workmen were necessary to make even one wing fairly comfortable. Theodora had been sufficiently roused from her sadness to go out a little into society, but not enough to open the splendid town house and entertain as her father would have wished. She agreed, however, to give a small party in the spacious garden at the back of the mansion, and at this evidence of her renewed interest in life Seymour rejoiced.

When Madame Fontarini made out her list of invitations, she smiled slightly at some of the names. Major Ashburton she particularly wished to come. There was something in him which, to her sensitive mind, gave dignity to any company in which he appeared. But she knew instinctively that he did not often go to garden parties, and in sending him a card, she wrote a pretty little note besides. She felt a secret desire that Fermor should come, an inward conviction that he would be

Wyndham, the American journalist, whom Ashburton had brought to see her, and whom she liked, was also

among those invited.

In looking over her visiting book, she found the name of Mrs. Bellenden. Theodora glanced at it, and then with her small, firm hand, drew a line through the name. She had heard nothing, and knew nothing, of Mrs. Bellenden, except the impertinence of her stare and her unexpected visit. dame Fontarini had returned the visit upon a day other than the one named on Mrs. Bellenden's card, and within ten minutes of having seen Mrs. Bellenden driving in the park. This species of snub, known only to women and diplomats, but perfectly understood by them, was quite intelligible to Mrs. Bellenden, but she did not so well understand the person with whom she was dealing. She classified Madame Fontarini as a woman accustomed to primitive social conditions, which Mrs. Bellenden thought prevailed in America, and as a person who could be intimidated. She would go again to the house in Queen's Gate, and take her

chances of getting in.

Not once had she seen Fermor, except to bow to him from her carriage, since their parting. Two or three times, Tom Bellenden had asked her what had become of Fermor, and to this she replied readily that she supposed he was offended with her because she had spoken rather freely concerning Madame Fontarini, and it was said that Lord Castlemaine not only meant to sell King's Lyndon to Seymour at a high price, but to sell Fermor's rank as well.

"It seems to me," said Bellenden in his slow fashion, "it would be a good thing for Fermor to marry and go into public life. I notice he has been restless for a long time. I am sorry, however, that you and he have fallen out."

It was on that same afternoon that Mrs. Bellenden determined to repeat her visit to Madame Fontarini. A number of carriages and motors were in the street, but there were other houses open besides Madame Fontarini's, and the season was coming down the home stretch.

The great doors opened at Mrs. Bellenden's approach, and she was invited, somewhat to her surprise, through the ground-floor suite and into the spacious green garden beyond. It was very beautiful as even a city garden may be when there are openness and space. In the midst of the green expanse of velvet turf stood Madame Fontarini and Seymour, receiving their guests.

Mrs. Bellenden realized at once that she was an uninvited guest, but the policy of rashness was hers. She advanced through the groups of gayly dressed women and more men than she had ever seen at a garden party be-fore, to Theodora, and made an explanation.

"I came to pay you a visit," she said, smiling, "and I see you are having a

na etar i

"I am very glad to see you," replied Theodora, but in her voice was that intonation which a woman's ear can always catch, and which means: "Don't

do it again.'

Seymour, however, with overflowing hospitality and kindness of heart, assured Mrs. Bellenden of their great pleasure that she had happened in at this time and no doubt there was a

mistake about the card.

Then, Mrs. Bellenden, smiling and full of sharp curiosity, glanced about her. The party was very distinguished, there was no doubt. The American ambassador and ambassadress were present, and other persons of the first fashion, but there were also persons who were more interesting than fashionable—Major Ashburton, for example.

Lord Castlemaine was in great form, and Lady Susan Battle, in a splendid purple satin gown, and loaded with jewels, was majestically convoying Joshua Battle, who followed her at a

respectful distance.

There was no sign of Fermor. Mrs. Bellenden, as an accidental guest, made

her visit short.

But as she was about to make her adieux, Wyndham came up and spoke to her. He rather liked Mrs. Bellenden's striking and effective style. She seemed to him as primitive in her way as Seymour was in his. She lived an artificial life in a natural manner. Mrs. Bellenden was not averse to cultivating Americans at that moment, as she was eager to find out, if possible, something concerning her host and hostess. Therefore, she made another tour of the garden with Wyndham after having said her farewells. She was full of interest about Wyndham's profession, and frankly curious to know how he could afford to live in the way he

"That's easy enough," replied Wyndham, laughing. "You see, my father had a hand in what is called high finance. I never had the least interest

in the subject. I was born with what

is called a nose for news."

"Are you finding out anything in England this time?" asked Mrs. Bellenden, turning full upon him her large blue eyes, and what was undoubtedly a dazzling smile.

"Yes, indeed," answered Wyndham.
"I am trying to pick up the thread of a story that sounds like what you call a 'shilling shocker.' Do you know

what a 'trusty' is?"

Mrs. Bellenden shook her head smil-

ingly.

"Some strange American thing, I

imagine," she said.

"It is a convict who has had a previous good record, and the warden of the jail sends him out on errands. Of course, the man has to wear ordinary clothes; if he wore prison clothes he'd he jumped on the instant he got out of the jail yard. They very seldom violate their liberty, because they are intelligent enough to know that it means another term in prison, but in the case of my trusty, he did everything according to contrary. He was a model prisoner, who was serving a short term for manslaughter-hit a man and inadvertently killed him. Just before his term expired, he was sent one day to a little town two miles off. He disappeared, and apparently the earth opened and swallowed him up. If a trusty is fifteen minutes behind time his absence is known, and so the hue and cry was raised immediately. Now, it seems that friends of this man had been working for his pardon with the governor of the State, and the pardon came just four hours after the man disappeared.

Wyndham had a peculiarly effective and dramatic way of telling things, and Mrs. Bellenden stood still at the foot of the stone steps that led into the garden, and leaned upon a marble vase

to listen to him.

"He was caught in the end?" she

asked.

"No, although he did the very thing of all others most likely to lead to his detection. At the end of a year a letter came from him somewhere in the West, enclosing a sum of money in gold to the warden to be given to aid the discharged prisoners. Every year for twenty years, this money has come, and of course it is impossible to trace gold pieces. For many years past the money has been sent from various countries in Europe. Then a vague rumor grew current in the State that this man had made a great pile of money. I became interested in the yarn, and concluded to turn myself into a discoverer, and find this man in Europe."

"How very interesting," murmured

Mrs. Bellenden.

'You are the first person who has said so," replied Wyndham, laughing.

Wyndham felt so grateful to Mrs. Bellenden for listening to his pet story that he accepted at once an invitation she gave him to call. As Mrs. Bellenden's carriage rolled away from Seymour's door, Lord Fermor entered it. This was not a pleasant sight for Mrs. Bellenden.

CHAPTER VII.

Two days after the garden party, Seymour and Theodora found themselves at King's Lyndon. On the first morning that Theodora waked in the large airy bedroom with two great windows looking over the beautiful but unkempt gardens, the green and rolling park, she felt in her heart a sensation of peace and rest which she had scarcely known before in her life. the last year or two the desire to return to America had stirred strongly within her, but it was the one wish of hers that Seymour did not try to gratify. She had discovered in her father, who had heretofore seemed unable to say nay to her, a fixed determination to remain in Europe. The determination seemed strange to Theodora, who, with the eyes of a woman of thirty, saw that Seymour had little sympathy with anything European, but for once he was settled in his mind against a plan of Theodora's.

Later in the morning, when Theodora walked about the house with her

father for the first time with a sense of proprietorship, she felt a just indignation against Lord Castlemaine. The picture gallery, a splendid and lofty apartment running the full length of the house, was absolutely bare. The story of how the Romneys and Gainsboroughs, and the entire accumulations of two hundred years had been eaten and drunk and gambled in horses, cards, and stocks, was one of the blackest marks against Lord Castlemaine. Fermor's rights had been ruthlessly disregarded. Seymour spoke of this to Theodora, as they stood together in the great, despoiled gallery, which looked as if an army of Goths had camped there overnight.

"This will be the most difficult part of the whole thing to restore," Seymour. "I don't know anything about pictures, and I've seen enough of them in Europe to know that objects of art can't be bought like potatoes.

What shall we do, my dear?

Theodora shook her head. "Let us go outside," she said, "and

think about it.'

The peace of the scene entered deeply into Theodora's soul. The place had been ravaged and then let alone. The caretaker, who might also be called the housekeeper, was Reyburn, a tall, dark, silent woman, who Theodora speedily recognized was by no means the usual type of prim English upper servant. Her husband, who was a shoemaker in the market town of Lyndon, was the founder and leader of a socialist club, which was a thorn in the flesh of both political parties. The shoemaker had been paralyzed in his lower limbs, and plied his trade and preached his doctrines from a wheeled chair-the gift of Lord Fermor, as Reyburn herself promptly informed Theodora.

Theodora found that this usually reticent, elderly woman could talk freely enough about the two subjects nearest her heart-her husband and Lord Fermor, who had been her nursling

It was plain that Reyburn had a complete list in her mind of all Lord Castlemaine's misdoings, regarding his son and heir, and everything else, and revealed as much as she could within her limits.

Theodora felt an inward conviction that Fermor had given up many things, not from weakness, for there was no indication of weakness about him, but in the beginning from experience, and in the end from the disinclination of a proud man to engage in a sordid controversy. This, modified, of course, was like a part of what she had endured in her marriage with Pietro Fontarini.

Next morning Theodora began in earnest to have her own and her father's rooms arranged before beginning the great work of rejuvenating, which would be put in the hands of capable men from London. There were a few pictures hanging on the walls, chiefly stained old engravings, and a sketch in water color of a boy still in dresses, holding a bird in a cage. It was stiff, affected, and amateurish in style, but there was something about it that indicated it to be a genuine like-

"Do you know who this is?" asked Theodora of Reyburn,

"That is Lord Fermor, madam," replied Reyburn. "It was done by Lady Castlemaine herself. I think there is some writing on the back."

Theodora took the picture out of the frame, and found written on the back:

Geoffrey George John Lyndon, Lord Fermor, aged five and a half years. Painted by his devoted mother, V. Castlemaine.

Theodora put the picture back gently into the frame, and placed it in the drawer of her desk, saying:

"I shall send this to Lord Fermor." Reyburn's eyes, which were somewhat hard and set in expression, filled with tears. This silent, narrow, and intense woman had a passionate affection for her nursling, and could not conceal it.

There are few things more interesting than the rehabilitating of a house and grounds, and when one's taste is good and money is plentiful, the difficulties and perplexities in the way only add to the pleasure. Seymour was delighted at the interest that Theodora showed in the work, and congratulated himself upon his purchase of King's

Lyndon,

Everything was to be restored, even the great bare ballroom, with its rusty lustres, and moth-eaten curtains. The experts from London could show how everything should be done, but Theodora wisely refused to give them carte blanche. In vain were the names of countesses and even duchesses, who had allowed the decorators and restorers to work their will unchecked. Theodora calmly declared, with the singular American courage, that the house was designed to be lived in, and she wished to impress her own individuality upon it. The work, however, was speedily put in hand, and progressed rapidly. Nevertheless, it would require at least six months before the restoration could be completed.

Theodora sent the little water color of himself, made by his mother, to Fermor, with a graceful note. In reply, she had a few lines full of gratitude, and a promise to call as soon as he returned to Longstaff from London,

The death of the sitting member for the division of the county occurred during this month, and it was published in the London newspapers that Lord Fermor would stand for the seat at the by-

election

Reyburn's passionate attachment to Fermor kept him continually before Theodora's mind. Reyburn had a strange power of conveying much in a few words, and Theodora was readily able to receive from Reyburn's words a picture of the lonely and sensitive boy and his neglected mother, living mea-grely in the great house, while Lord Castlemaine maintained state in London. Fermor had interested Theodora from the beginning far more than she had ever supposed any man could, and she found herself listening to Reyburn with attention when his name came up in the matter of rehabilitating King's Lyndon.

Fermor was dividing his time between London and Longstaff, ten miles away from King's Lyndon, and was as hard worked as a man could be, making his first contest for a parliamentary seat. Lord Castlemaine did not let him forget that Madame Fontarini would be, by long odds, the most advantageous person for him to marry. King's Lyndon, moreover, was a valuable factor in the district, and Theodora herself was charming. Fermor felt himself inclined to the marriage. He had the outlook of an Englishman of his class, but he realized that Madame Fontarini would require more courting than the heir to an earldom is usually required to make.

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He felt a strong desire to see Theodora, and one afternoon in July drove over to King's Lyndon. No one was at home but Reyburn, delighted to see him, and who insisted upon giving him tea before he returned. A slight rain gave her an excuse to serve the tea in the little yellow morning room, which had been Lady Castlemaine's. It still retained not only many memories for Fermor, but many objects which he recognized. Reyburn, who, like all women from the scullion to the princess, was a promoter of marriages, had heard it hinted that a marriage might be arranged between Fermor and Madame Fontarini, and she proceeded to give the plan some efficient help.

She was full of praise of Theodora and her father, and the sly suggestiveness of her talk made Fermor smile.

After half an hour, he took the road again, his mind somewhat occupied with Theodora. She was certainly the antipodes of Flora Bellenden, and that was, in itself, a powerful recommendation. Mrs. Bellenden had at last realized that Fermor would hold no further communication with her, as he steadily declined to answer her letters, and she no longer molested him. He would tell any woman he might marry about Mrs. Bellenden, but it was an ugly story to put in words, and Fermor surmised would be uglier to an American than an English woman.

Seymour went up to London once during the month and saw Lord Castlemaine, who skillfully suggested the marriage between Fermor and Theodora. Seymour was somewhat startled, but as he told Lord Castlemaine, it was his wish to see Theodora "happily married," as he put it, considering that in the event of his death she would be utterly alone in the world.

On his return from London, Seymour made some guarded allusion to what Lord Castlemaine had said, adding apologetically:

"You know, my dear child, things are differently arranged over here from what they are in America, and when money and rank are considered they are frankly estimated."

Theodora laughed a little, and made some daughter's joke with her father about his anxiety to be rid of her, but Seymour felt amazed by the fact that she was not offended at the sugges-

Theodora studied the subject from that point of ingenious self-deception which every woman can command. She succeeded in persuading herself that if Lord Fermor should propose, it would be a judicious marriage for both of They were no longer boy and them. girl; they could understand the marriage of sympathy, friendship, respect; there was no occasion for either pretending to be in love with the other. The one fact from which she turned her eyes was that, from the first meeting with Fermor, she had found herself thinking of him with an astonishing frequency.

CHAPTER VIII.

These things were passing through Theodora's mind when, one morning in August, to escape the army of workmen that swarmed over the house and garden, she walked to the farthest end of the park.

The morning was shadowed, rather than overcast, by a silvery mist, which hid the groups of gnarled oak and beech trees like a muslin veil, and lent a soft coolness to the air as it touched Theodora's delicate cheeks, to which a girlish bloom was returning. She had walked almost to the edge of the park

near the highroad when the mist suddenly turned to a hard shower. Taking up her skirts, she ran toward a niche with a stone bench in the solid wall of cedars which marked the boundaries of the park. Over this niche a great Norwegian fir extended its arms

like a canopy.

Just as Theodora gained the refuge she heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and the next moment a horseman trotted under the fir tree, and Fermor dismounted and threw the reins over a branch. Then, turning toward the stone bench, which was barely large enough for two, he saw Theodora sitting in one corner of it, smiling, and secure from

the rain.

Fermor came and sat down in the vacant place. They were so close together that they could study each other as never before. It was the first time Theodora had seen him in riding dress, and he looked well in it, and younger and fresher, more boylike than she had supposed possible. Fermor noticed the same rejuvenation in Theodora. Her month in the country had given her a new freshness. The dampness had somewhat disheveled her hair, but its graceful disorder added to the youthfulness of her appearance.

"I was on my way to see you and Mr. Seymour." he said, "when the shower caught me. I remembered this refuge, and have sat here many hundreds of times in the days when I was

a little boy."

"It must be very hard," said Theodora, "to see strangers, even though they are friends, in one's old home. I have felt that very much since we have

been at King's Lyndon."

"It isn't half so hard as to see the place going to rack and ruin," replied Fermor cheerfully. "Besides, we English are now being infected with some of your American ideas. We are beginning to live in the present. I have been so much taken up with political concerns for the last few weeks that I have not been able to give much thought to other affairs."

"What are your prospects?" asked

Theodora, smiling.

"Ask the committee," replied Fer-

mor, laughing.

"You have a very earnest supporter in Reyburn," said Theodora. "I am keeping her on as housekeeper, and I have discovered that there is but one correct way to do anything, and that is as Lady Castlemaine did it, and as you have approved from the time you were ten years old."

"It is a great thing to have even one human being devoted to one. Reyburn I reckon to be my best and earliest friend among women. I am glad to hear you like her. She is a faithful creature. Do you like the place as well as you expected?"

"Quite as much," answered Theodora. "Sometimes I have the feeling that the people who once lived there are the real people, and we are but the shadows, the unrealities; but that, I suppose, is the feeling that comes to every one who lives in a place like King's Lyndon."

They continued talking for a few minutes, when Fermor inadvertently

spoke of Rome.

"I try to think of Rome as seldom as I can. I had no hope at all when we came to England," she said, "but since that, time and the desire to please my father have given me a little hope. I hope for peace, even if I have no happiness in life. For I assure you," she continued, turning full upon Fermor, "I had no happiness in my marriage, not for so much as one week, nor as much as I loved my child did I have much happiness in him. I could be tortured through him, and I was tortured through him by Pietro Fontarini."

As she spoke her husband's name the fire of resentment burned in her eyes and echoed in her low voice. She hated the memory of Pietro Fontarini as she had hated and despised the man after knowing him, and it came out in spite of herself, for she recollected at once that she was speaking to a comparative stranger, and stopped suddenly.

"Can any woman marry a man she does not love?" he said.

"Yes," answered Theodora, with prompt directness. "What can an inexperienced girl of eighteen know of love? Would you call the mere fancy of a sentimental girl for a handsome face, a graceful carriage, by the name of love? It is no more love than the fancy for a picture, or a statue, or anything else which a girl may idealize. In my case, it was a man. My father, for some reason which I do not now understand, was eager for the marriage. I had no one to advise me, to hold me back. The Fontarinis, all of them, tried to bring about the marriage. I look back on myself with

the deepest pity."

The white rain was still coming down in sheets, and Theodora's sudden confidences concerning the tragedy of her life, made in a solitude almost as complete as if they were alone in a world all their own, touched Fermor deeply. He said a few words full of meaning to her, and she, with her ready understanding, comprehended. A deep blush flooded her face, as she listened to him. It was not exactly a lover's pleading. Fermor was too sincere a man to profess more than he felt, and least of all to a woman of great wealth. But it was the offer of fidelity, of honor, of all that had been lacking in Pietro Fontarini. Something was lacking, too, in Fermor's offer; the deep affection for which Theodora yearned, and of which she felt herself capable. But something was there which was the last thing on earth to be expected, and which was exactly opposed to outward appearances. This was disinterestedness.

He did not press Theodora for an answer then, asking her only to take it into consideration. This Theodora promised, and would promise no more than that, but deep in her heart was the conviction that here lay her one chance for happiness.

After tea, in the cool bright summer afternoon, Seymour and Theodora went to walk. Theodora led her father to the little refuge under the Norwegian fir tree. When they were together in that green solitude, she put her hand in his, and told him what Fermor had said to her.

"Papa," she said, fixing her dark and serious eyes upon him, "here is the strange, the comforting, thing; Lord Fermor would not be marrying me for money-or, rather-for money alone. I can't tell you how I know this. Of course he needs money, but he would not sell himself. You may call this vanity, but it is not; it is the

"I believe it," he said. "How could any man keep from loving you? I believe even that scoundrel, Pietro Fontarini, was in love with you after his rascally fashion, but this man-My dearest, it is the best thing that could happen. Ashburton thinks highly of him, and Ashburton's word about

a man may be taken.'

"Are you anxious to be rid of me, papa?" asked Theodora. It is the question which a fond daughter asks of

an adoring father.

"Yes," answered Seymour, with a strange solemnity. "I am anxious to see you with a man's strong arm between you and the world, anxious to feel that if I were not with you always there would be another and a better

Theodore put her hand over her

father's lips.

"Hush!" she cried. "Neither you nor any one else shall ever say such a thing as that. You are the best man that ever lived. If Lord Fermor is only half as good-but, no, he can't be. I must make up my mind, if I marry him, to find him not so kind, not so self-sacrificing as you, nor can he ever come between us, or ever make it so that I can't come to you if you need me.'

All at once in this first moment that the thought of a separation came to Theodora, the recollection of her father's unceasing devotion, watchfulness, and passionate affection overwhelmed her. The large, bright tears rolled down her cheeks, as she said brokenly:

"When I think of what you have

been to me from the time I can first remember until this moment, it seems as if no daughter ever had such a father."

Seymour kissed her silently, the passion of fatherhood speaking in his face as the devotion of filial love shone in Theodora's eyes. Father and daughter walked back through the purple twilight, Seymour's arm within Theodora's. They always fell into those attitudes in which Theodora seemed protecting the gentle old man.

CHAPTER IX.

On the following Saturday, Ashburton, with Wyndham, came to King's

Lyndon for the week-end.

Fermor's visit was mentioned, and Ashburton, in spite of Seymour's reticence concerning the object of it, surmised its meaning. The proposed marriage was hinted in many quarters, despite Lady Susan Battle's fierce pronunciamento that no person connected with the Castlemaine family would condescend to an American alliance. Ashburton was full of Fermor's election prospects, which he hoped would result in benefit to the laboring classes, of whom the late incumbent had been peculiarly forgetful. It seemed to Ashburton as if Fermor's rehabilitation would be complete if married to a sweet and intelligent woman, and engaged in a useful public life.

The house-party guests left on the Monday morning, and Theodora resumed her life of quiet reflection. Outwardly, there was much to do, to think of, and to decide, and the mansion resounded with noise all day. there was nothing of a disturbing na-Not only Theodora, but her father, was thinking about the future. Like all women, Theodora studied her own heart closely, and she at once realized that Fermor had a powerful and growing attraction for her. He was ever in her mind, not in his aspect of rank, because to marry him would be no real elevation to Madame Fontarini. Her personality, her fortune, gave her the pas anywhere, and, as in

her first marriage to Pietro Fontarini, she would lose, rather than gain,

All women act upon much they cannot formulate. So did Theodora, and when the time came that she must ask herself where she belonged in the social order, it was already settled in advance. She gave, therefore, no thought to the question of rank with which the world credited her. Just as, by the same singular contradiction, Fermor was but slightly influenced by Madame Fontarini's millions, and the exchange of rank for money had no real existence in the mind of either Theodora or Fermor. The one real appeal which Theodora's money made to Fermor was that it would be agreeable to live once more at King's Lyndon, for which he had a secret and sentimental attachment. But to live at King's Lyndon with a wrangling wife, or with Flora Bellenden-Fermor felt a wholesome disgust at the idea.

Theodora pleased his taste, and she had that indefinable difference, that attraction of novelty, which has made so international marriages many

American women.

On the evening preceding the day when Fermor had said he would return for his answer, Theodora, for the first time in the two weeks, broke her silence with her father on the subject as they sat on the terrace in the summer moonlight. She felt herself blushing like a girl when she said to Sey-

"To-morrow, you remember, Lord Fermor comes for his answer."

"Do you think I could forget it?" asked Seymour. "When a father is "When a father is considering the marriage of an only child, the best of daughters, it is not likely to be out of his mind for very long. I have been praying and hoping that you will accept Lord Fermor, but I have not dared to say one word."
"I shall accept Lord Fermor," said

Theodora, in a low voice.

"You do not know what it is to me," he said, with a curious ring of pathos in his voice, "to feel that you will be safe with a man's strong arm between you and the world. Money, such as you

have, and as I shall give you, is no safeguard; it is only an additional danger. But for that money you would have been saved from Pietro Fontarini. I have great confidence in Lord Fermor, and I believe at last the great happiness which you deserve is beginning."

Like the true American father, it had never entered into Seymour's mind that his daughter had not aroused the most passionate attachment in Lord Fermor, or that he would not be as subject to her will as an American man

would be.

The next morning's post brought Theodora a note from Fermor. He was coming from London and would reach King's Lyndon at five o'clock, to remain an hour if she would not allow

him to stay longer.

Theodora would have wished to see Fermor in the very spot where he had first proposed marriage to her, but as he had touched but lightly on sentiment in his words to her, pride forbade her to see him there. She chose for their rendezvous the quaint old temple, with its stained marble columns,

by the side of the lake.

Toward five o'clock she walked across the lawn to the temple, carrying, for form's sake, a book in her hand. She had picked it up at random, and did not look at it until she had reached the temple. Then she blushed to find it a volume of Shelley. She still had time to carry it back to the house, and, leaving the temple, she sped, with her peculiarly light and graceful step, toward the yew alley, which was the shortest way to the house. Just as she entered the green solitude she came face to face with Fermor.

"I am a little early," he said, smiling, "but a man coming upon my errand generally is, or ought to be, early."

Theodora made no reply, but a delicate color replaced the usual soft, clear pallor of her cheeks. This pleased Fermor. He hated a woman without sentiment, and was tortured by Theodora's silence, which was plainly the

silence of controlled emotion. Without speaking, they walked between the dark green walls on either side of them, not toward the temple, but toward the greater seclusion of the alley.

When they neared the end of the alley and could see plainly the wide, bright expanse of the lake shimmering in the splendor of the sunset, Fermor laid a light, but detaining, hand upon the filmy white mantle which half enveloped Theodora's slight figure.

"You will let me remain, will you

not?" asked Fermor.

"Yes," replied Theodora, after a pause, in a low and composed voice.

Fermor took her hand and kissed it. "If fidelity, honor, and admiration for you, and the deepest and most constant regard for your happiness can suffice, then I shall hope to make you happier than you have yet been."

Half an hour later they were sitting on the terrace, and Theodora was giving Fermor his tea. Seymour had judiciously absented himself for the after-Fermor and Theodora were noon. talking together upon the subject most interesting to the human mind, themselves and their affairs. gained a curious insight into Theodora's mind. The attitude of the American woman was ridiculously different in many ways concerning domestic relations from the English woman. There was no surrender of the will on Theodora's part, but a sweet complaisance that was in itself the essence of flattery to a man. She did not make him feel as if he were the only man in the world; but, as if knowing many men, she preferred to play the hazardous game of marriage with him to any other man.

Of her delicacy and tact, especially in regard to money, Fermor had ample proof. Many things surprised and puzzled him, but he expected to find puzzles and surprises in every woman. One was that Theodora evidently expected that her marriage would make no changes whatever in her relations with her father, although she mentioned that he had determined to take up his residence at Barley Wood, a

small estate, which was a part of the

King's Lyndon property.

"Papa and I have settled it," said Theodora. "Then I can see him every day, for I am sure papa could not be happy very far from me, nor could I be happy with him far away.'

Fermor agreed, as a newly engaged man does. He had heard and read of the devotion of the American father, and he realized it was something totally different from the relations of the nor-

mal British father.

After tea they walked up and down the terrace together in the darkening evening, and felt an agreeable sense of well-being in each other's society

Seymour did not return until Theodora had gone to her room to dress for dinner. He came into her little boudoir to speak to her, and she said with so-

lemnity as he kissed her:

"I am beginning a new life with hope—the hope of happiness. But, papa, nothing, nothing can ever come between you and me. Not all my past wretchedness or any happiness which may be in store for me will ever make any difference. You know that, don't you, papa?"

"Yes," replied Seymour, "I know it

well."

He held Theodora off a little way and looked at her with profound pride. She wore the same silvery gown in which Fermor had first seen her on the night of the dinner at the prime minister's.

Her aspect was altogether brighter and gayer than Seymour had ever ex-

pected to see in her again.
"Now," he said, "be ten minutes late in coming down. I dare say Lord Fermor wants to say a word or two to me, and I shall give him his chance."

Few men anticipate with pleasure the first interview with a prospective father-in-law, but Fermor's was as easy as could well be expected.

"You see," said Seymour, as the two men sat together in the great, dim, rose-scented drawing-room waiting for Theodora, "my daughter is entirely alone in the world. The thought that I might die and leave her unprotected has been a most painful one to me. It was that which made me encourage her marriage with that scoundrel, who deceived me as well as her. I am not a man of the world, Lord Fermor. I made my money very rapidly, and even accidentally, and for certain reasons I have lived abroad. I don't understand the structure of European society at all, and I don't seem to be able to make myself very well understood by Europeans, although better with you and Major Ashburton than any men I have met so far. After my experience with Fontarini, you cannot be surprised that I should take every possible precaution as far as I can to secure my daughter's happiness and independence, but I can assure you from a knowledge of her character that if you win her affection you will never be made to feel either by her or by me that the money

Seymour then coolly named a sum, and the terms upon which it was to be settled upon Theodora and any children which she might have, that was so large and on such generous terms that Fermor involuntarily showed surprise. Seymour smiled his slow smile.

At that moment Theodora entered

the room.

"It is all settled, my love," said Seymour, rising, with Fermor, as Theodora came up to them. "I think you will be happy, and my mind is at ease

concerning you."

Fermor said what was expected of him, and said it as a sincere man should. Then they went in to dinner, at which Theodora presided with a soft brightness, and with so little embarrassment that the butler and footman, accustomed to English fiancées, concluded the whole business had gone wrong, and Lord Fermor had not proposed.

Fermor remained the night, and was pleased with the thoughtfulness which

put him in his old rooms.

After breakfast next morning, Fermor and Theodora walked together through the park. New surprises awaited him at every point in his interview with Theodora. He had expected that the day for the marriage would be named before he left King's Lyndon, and was considerably staggered when Theodora said she thought it would be best to wait until after Christmas, at least, for many reasons, and that the engagement must be kept absolutely secret until not more than a month before the marriage took place.

"You see," she said calmly, as they stood in front of the little temple and watched the ducks sedately making their toilets in the rushes, "the restoration of the house is well under way, and my father wishes me to be here to see that things are properly done. What are you laughing at?"

"I am trying to accommodate my British mind to your American ideals," replied Fermor, laughing still more. "It is all perfectly right, of course."

"But you never saw a daughter who had quite so many privileges as I." replied Theodora, smiling, "In America daughters have great privileges, but I believe even in America my father would be reckoned the most indulgent of fathers. However, don't you see that it is best not to arrange for our marriage until after Christmas, when everything will be in order?"

"I can't say that I do," replied Fermor, like a gallant, gentleman.

Nevertheless, he did see the sound sense in what Theodora said. The plans were all made, the work, costing a very large sum of money, was then going on, and required some one to superintend it. Theodora was plainly that some one, and not Seymour. But what Fermor could not understand was the reason for not acknowledging the engagement.

"It would be useless, and a little embarrassing," said Theodora, with gentle conviction "It is no one's affair except yours and my father's and mine. I believe that you think it a little disreputable to keep it quiet."

"Well—er—an engaged man or woman going around, with the engagement unacknowledged, is looked upon as a little fraudulent, but I suppose we must learn of our cousins, the Americans." "Decidedly you must, but we may have it this way. That no engagement shall exist until after Christmas, we will say."

Fermor looked at Theodora with ad-

"Where did you find out all of these ingenious American subterfuges? You were not brought up in America? Is it in the blood?"

"Yes," answered Theodora, "it is in the blood. I have not seen my native country since I was ten years old. I was educated in France, and have spent my life in Italy and England, and yet I feel I see the gulf between the American and European way of looking at things."

Fermor found himself acquiescing, if not actually agreeing, with Theodora in a manner which convinced him that he was slipping in love with her.

CHAPTER X.

Fermor returned to London to meet Lord Castlemaine by appointment. The town was quite deserted, but Castlemaine House stood open all the year round. Lord Castlemaine heard Fermor's account of the arrangement, the proposition concerning money, and all the other details of the engagement, including the secrecy of it, with amazement. He had, however, that perfect toleration of a man of the world, and his only comment was:

"I hereby reserve for myself the pleasure of telling these details to Susan Battle. Especially the not acknowledging the engagement. Ha! Ha!"

Lord Castlemaine laughed a great laugh of amusement and fury.

Then he begun to talk about Fermor's election prospects, which were good, and announced his willingness to make several addresses to the voters of the division. Fermor referred him to his election managers, for Lord Castlemaine's political services were always particularly dreaded by those whom he offered to assist.

Lord Castlemaine was not a man to wait for chances, but to make them. Two weeks afterward he appeared at

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King's Lyndon. The house was still. Lord Castlemaine found Theodora deep in consultation with an eminent landscape gardener from London, who was looking slightly puzzled at the authority she assumed in her father's ab-

sence.

"I was just saying to Mr. Clemsen," she said to Lord Castlemaine, "that my father and I had determined upon a restoration of the old Dutch gardens, beyond the Italian gardens, just as they were a hundred years ago. It is not that we are afraid of innovation, but that we think the original plan was good."

"Excellent," answered Lord Castle-

maine.

Theodora invited him into the house, but Lord Castlemaine, who meant to have a talk in which he could express his feelings freely, and could raise his voice, if necessary, suggested to Theodora that they walk through the shrub-

bery.

Once alone on the velvet grass in the summer morning, Lord Castlemaine expressed his pleasure in very handsome terms at the coming marriage. No man could turn a compliment better than the Earl of Castlemaine, and Theodora's woman's pride was flattered by this polished savage being so amiable to her.

"The only fault I find," he said, "is the postponement of the marriage. I do think it a pity that Fermor has not the benefit of your services in the campaign, as you call it in America. You should be married at once, and as Lady Fermor, you could go on the platform, and you would be a great success."

"I go on the platform!" cried Theodora, "What could I possibly say that any voter would want to hear?"

"My charming friend, you need not say anything. Show your attractive self and tell the voters your ambition is that your husband shall be an M. P."

"Nobody can convince others who is not himself, or herself, convinced," replied Theodora, with the same gentle decisiveness that was always astonishing Fermor.

Lord Castlemaine had come down

with the fixed intention of doing two things: One was, hastening the marriage; the other, getting some better terms out of Seymour for Fermor. This last might be called a purely disinterested effort to obtain justice for an Englishman.

At the conclusion of the interview, Lord Castlemaine, who never blinked the truth to himself, however he might do it to others, was convinced that he had been completely unhorsed in his first tilt, and that Theodora would not be married until it suited her sovereign

pleasure

At luncheon, Seymour appeared, and was the soul of simple and kindly hospitality. There was neither elation nor patronage in his manner, and an entire absence of self-consciousness, both on his part and Theodora's. Lord Castlemaine thought he had never seen so unembarrassed a fiancée as his future daughter-in-law.

After luncheon, Lord Castlemaine, to the surprise of both father and daughter, requested a private interview with

Seymour.

"Come into my study," said Sey-

mour.

Lord Castlemaine followed his host into a small room, up a flight of stairs, one of the few which the workmen had not invaded.

"It is next my daughter's boudoir," said Seymour, shutting the door. "It is very convenient on that account. But my daughter is not in her boudoir at present, and it is quite private."

Lord Castlemaine knew the room well, and its unchanged appearance gave him a feeling as if King's Lyndon had not yet entirely passed out of his possession. He began, with his

usual directness.

"Fermor has told me," he said, "of the really magnificent settlements you have made upon Madame Fontarini, and I suppose he is very much in love with your daughter, who is certainly charming enough in all conscience, to have agreed to such terms. For himself, however, there is absolutely no provision, in the event of the future Lady Fermor's death, and, even if there are children, everything appears to be tied up so that Fermor is made a pensioner, so to speak, upon his children."

This plain and accurate statement of the case did not appear to shock or surprise Seymour. On the contrary, after a moment's reflection, he said:

"I think you have stated it clearly enough. I'm doing for my daughter what any American father would do, I If Lord Fermor shows my daughter the kindness and affection for which I hope, I'll say to you, as I said to him, that you will never be made to feel, either by her or by me, that the money came to him by marriage, in-

stead of inheritance."

"Very pretty, that," said Lord Castlemaine, "but absolutely outlandish, according to British ideas. Everything connected with marriage is a compromise, and our ideas concerning a woman's fortune in marriage are so radically different from American ideas that mutual concessions must be made. What we would consider perfectly justifiable conduct on the part of a man, you might, according to the American notion, consider quite unjustifiable, and the future Lady Fermor might withhold from her husband, for reasons not accepted by us, money which we would consider him justly entitled to claim. And, if there are children, they would find out eventually their father's state of dependence, and the whole position would be intolerable for Fermor."

"I'm afraid there isn't much room for compromise in this matter. If Lord Fermor feels that he is not being well treated, he is at perfect liberty to withdraw now, and at any moment up to the very hour that the marriage is to take place, and in this I speak for my daughter as well as for myself. All Lord Fermor has to do is to intimate what you say, and the thing is settled. As a result of keeping the engagement entirely secret, my daughter will not be embarrassed by Lord

Fermor's withdrawal."

There could be no doubt of Seymour's sincerity, and that he knew what he was talking about. Lord Castlemaine, a little staggered, said, fol-

lowing a pause:

"I don't think there is any question of withdrawal. I am inclined to suspect Lord Fermor of being, as I told you before, very much charmed with Madame Fontarini."

"I suppose he must be if he wants to marry her," replied Seymour placidly, "and my daughter is a woman very well calculated to make a man fall in love with her. I'm very proud of my

daughter, Lord Castlemaine.'

"I never saw an American father who was not," replied Lord Castle-maine, with a cheerful grin, "and I have seen some American daughters, by no means as charming as Madame Fontarini, who were regarded with awe and delight by their adoring parents, though not by anybody else. However, to return from the abstract to the concrete. If there are children, as I say, it would appear as if Lord Fermor would have no control whatever their property. Everything would be in the hands of trustees."

"He would have the moral influence of a good father," replied Seymour, "and if he is not a good father, and didn't treat them properly, I should simply go and take my daughter and her children away from him, as any other American father would do."

Lord Castlemaine thought that life held no more surprises for him, but this cool statement, made by a man whom he considered, though simple in some ways, clear-headed enough in others, astonished him.

"I think you might find great difficulty in carrying out this plan in England," said Lord Castlemaine; "the courts would never permit it.'

"Probably not, but I assure you that if my daughter and her children were ill-treated I would get her out of her husband's hands, if it cost me every dollar I have on earth. In her marriage with Pietro Fontarini she kept many things from me, knowing very well what I would do, and I, for a long time, not looking beneath the surface, didn't know her sufferings. She had a child, you know, and I thought

Fontarini loved the boy and was quite incapable of harming him. I made a blunder of it from the beginning to the end of that marriage, and I determined that, if my daughter ever married again, I would protect her against

such awful possibilities."

Lord Castlemaine sat silent. He was aware that he had received an ultimatum, and that it was useless to say another word on the subject. While he was turning over the matter of this unreasonableness on the part of American fathers, Seymour spoke with a note in his voice which Lord Castlemaine had not before heard.

"May I ask if you in any way represent Lord Fermor in this matter?"

"No," answered Lord Castlemaine.
"I told him that he was very much—
Well, never mind what I said, but there
was no suggestion on his part of any
attempt to change the terms of settlement."

"Consider well, Lord Castlemaine," said Seymour, fixing his eyes on that gentleman, "and consult your memory again, to make absolutely sure."

"Fermor did not say a word looking to a demand for a change in the set-

tlements."

"I am glad of that, for the good opinion I wish to entertain of Lord Fermor. If this suggestion had come from him in the remotest degree, or even if he had known the object of your interview, the engagement would have been off at this moment."

Lord Castlemaine sat plunged forward in his chair, looking through the window at the wide, green lawns, the ornamental water, basking in the still,

quiet summer afternoon.

He finally rose, grinning. He rather enjoyed his defeat; it had in it some comic elements, and, after all, it was Fermor, and not he, who was being robbed of his rights, so to speak.

CHAPTER XI.

Fermor as a lover proved a model of good taste and discretion. His electoral labors in the division accounted for his being frequently in the neighborhood, and especially at King's Lyndon, in order to retain as much as possible of the interest he had once possessed there. The upset condition of the house and the necessity of superintending the great masses of work kept Theodora much at home, so that there was little beyond the general suspicion attached to every man in Europe who looks twice at a woman to connect Theodora's name with Fermor's.

The weeks passed with great rapidity to Theodora. Being a woman, and not a girl, she had acknowledged to herself that her heart was more engaged with Fermor than he or any one else knew. Her pride was ever armed and watchful, and she was discerning enough to know that unasked love is one of the most wearisome and annoying things on earth to a man. She was fully capable of acting the part to Lord Fermor of the woman who makes a marriage of friendship and respect, a thing so common in Europe that nobody ever remarks upon it.

But Theodora was not without a haughty confidence in herself, and had not the least fear that Lord Fermor or any one else would find out her secret; and the little hopes and dreams that sprang up in her path, and showed their smiling faces like the first snowdrops of the spring, were known only to herself. Like a true woman, she thought that Fermor should be made to sue for her love, and to ask long for what was already his, unknown to

Fermor wrote her brief, occasional letters, to which she replied with charming grace, and these little letters might just as well have been written to Lord Castlemaine, as far as any personal note was contained in them. This was new to Fermor, and somewhat rueful to him. It was plain that the task of courtship was left entirely to himself, and that, where an Englishwoman would have met him halfway, this American woman required him to go the whole distance himself.

The by-election was extremely close, and it took the official count to determine whether Fermor had carried the division. He had, however, by the narrow margin of something less than a hundred votes. The election hung in the balance for forty-eight hours.

It was arranged that Fermor should wire her next day the instant the result of his election was known. All day Theodora waited in silent impatience for the dispatch which did not

Seymour, who was deeply interested in the election, got conflicting news late in the afternoon. At nine o'clock in the evening the election was still in doubt. Seymour walked down to the little telegraph office in the village to find out the latest news. Theodora, taking her violin, went into the great dark ballroom, and with a single candle resting on the console, before a huge mirror, began to play. Never had it seemed to her that she was more full of emotion than at that hour. The night before she had seen, with her woman's prescience, that Fermor was falling in love with her very rapidly. She felt like a queen, who, having been dethroned and discrowned, was returning in triumph to her kingdom, once more to be crowned and enthroned.

Up to the door came Fermor, guided by the delicate strains of the music. He opened the door noiselessly, came in, and closed it behind him without the least sound. Theodora had risen, and, in her soft, trailing gown, was moving slowly across the floor as she played. It reminded Fermor of the first day he had ever seen her, when the strains of her violin reached him on the sunny balcony.

He was strongly susceptible to music, and the sweet thrilling of the strings as Theodora played communicated itself from her soul to his. She was like the very spirit of music as her white figure moved back and forth in the dimness. The candle in the tall silver candlestick gave out only the single point of light that made the darkness visible, and revealed her shadowy presence in the great dark mirrors upon the wall.

After ten minutes Theodora stopped

playing, ending with a beautiful little cadenza, bright and sharp and sweet. Then, laying her violin down on the piano, she sank into a corner of one of the long sofas that lined the wall. She did not know of Fermor's presence until he stood before her, smiling, in the shadowy darkness, and said:

"Forgive me for listening, but I love your music."

Theodora did not spring up, startled, as Fermor expected she would. Her mind had been so full of him, and she was so wrought upon by her fancies, that it seemed the most natural thing in the world that he should appear. She held out the slim, little hand that had wielded the strong bow, and said, with smiling composure:

"I had a strange feeling, as if some one were listening, some one who understood."

Her eyes, accustomed to the gloom of the great apartment, saw something in Fermor's face that indicated satisfaction and relief.

"You have good news," she said.
"Yes," answered Fermor, seating himself by her side. "I won by a frightfully close vote."

Theodora impulsively put her hand in his with what seemed to Fermor a frank friendliness. It was encouraging or discouraging, according to what he required of the woman whom he was to marry, but Fermor retained her hand. Theodora began to ask him questions, so full of interest and so eager for his replies, he thought she had forgotten that he held her hand. Not so, for one instant. Theodora meant to be chary with her favors.

However, she was all sympathy, and it was the more agreeable to Fermor because she knew nothing of political life, and asked him details with the utmost simplicity, but she easily understood what he told her. Fermor said, smiling, after a while, that when he stood for reelection he expected great help from her, as she already showed capacity for political affairs. Theodora smiled, and appreciated the compliment.

He remained an hour longer. Ac-

customed as he was to the frank attitude of English fiancées, Theodora's reserve was a novelty, but he concluded he rather liked it, remembering the trembling of her hand as he held it, and the faint color in her cheeks, and her occasionally downcast eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

The unusual has its charm for everybody, and Flora Bellenden was by no means an uninteresting person to Wyndham. It seemed to him that she was in many respects the elemental and primitive woman to a degree far greater than he had ever seen before, and on this primitiveness was superposed a very high degree of artificiality.

She had a frank contempt, scarcely inferior to Lady Susan Battle's, for American men, and an equally frank displeasure that so many Englishmen should desire American wives.

This was sharply accentuated by what she considered Fermor's perfidy to herself. She expressed something of this to Wyndham one afternoon in the early autumn, when he called at the house in Chester Street. Since the late summer she had been on the Continent, and had just returned to town.

"Every place I went," she complained, as she gave him tea in the drawing-room, "was full of your countrymen and countrywomen. The European men were all flocking around the American women, and so were the American men, for that matter. English women, you know, don't care for American men, which seems a pity, considering the scarcity of men in England."

Wyndham laughed.

"The trouble is," he said, "that under your laws and customs, when an unmarried girl meets an unmarried man she either keeps him at arms' length by talking about the weather and the flower show, or, if she is of the other sort, she tells him she can't get on with her father, and hates her mother, and virtually makes an offer of marriage. American men are not accustomed to this sort of thing, and

don't know how to take it. So we find the normal English girl too backward or too forward. We are accustomed, you know, to a girl who treats a man like a doormat one minute, and flatters him within an inch of his life the next, and frankly admits that marriage is a last desperate resort. It is only another cataclysmal difference in the attitude of the mind between the American and the Englishman."

"I have never seen anything bolder than an American girl," replied Mrs. Bellenden tartly. "I think they trap

Englishmen.'

Wyndham continued laughing. He was not surprised at the sense of injury that rankled in Mrs. Bellenden's breast. There was certainly something humiliating to find women of another nation coming over in droves to England, and carrying the stiff-necked Englishmen by storm.

"I am told," Mrs. Bellenden kept on,

"I am told," Mrs. Bellenden kept on, "that all Americans are not rich, but they give themselves the airs of prin-

cesses on two and sixpence."

At that Wyndham put his cup of tea down, and lay back in his chair, convulsed with his peculiar, silent laughter.

She continued, and asked Wyndham if he had seen anything lately of Mr. Seymour and his daughter, Madame Fontarini.

"Not since I visited them, in the summer," replied Wyndham.

Then he proceeded to describe the beauties and glories of the rehabilitated King's Lyndon, and spoke with enthusiasm of Madame Fontarini's grace and charm, which were enhanced by the splendor of her environment.

Nothing Wyndham could have said would have disquieted and angered Mrs. Bellenden more than this.

"I don't see why you go off and visit people like that without knowing anything about them?" she asked.

"They know as much about me as I know about them," he answered. "I judge for myself. Most people, especially men, find Madame Fontarini charming. So do I. But Mr. Seymour has a peculiar interest for me.

He is very far from a fool, and yet has a very singular simplicity. Still, when one considers that, although he became rich by an accident, he says, he seems to manage his money with great judgment, or, rather, with conservatism. He spends liberally, but I don't think that anybody could do him."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Bellenden slowly, "he is the escaped criminal whom you are trying to trace."

It was a chance shot, but it gave Wyndham a great and sudden shock. He immediately turned the conversation and would say no more about Mr. Seymour and Madame Fontarini. Presently, he got up to go, and Mrs. Bellenden was left alone.

Wyndham, after leaving the Chester Street house, walked as in a dream along the street in the dull London atmosphere of an autumn afternoon. Not once until that moment had he connected Seymour with the ghastly story he was pursuing. There were some points of resemblance, but others totally at variance. The man in question was not married at the time that Theodora must have been born, and was it possible that this mild, humble-voiced Seymour could have struck a deadly blow to any man?

Wyndham could not bring himself to think this, but the possibility, once suggested to him, he desired to get rid of it, and, by way of clearing his own mind concerning Seymour, went into the search with redoubled zest. He wrote that day a number of letters to America, and began going all over the history of the case, which had acquired for him an extraordinary interest

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The farther he penetrated into the maze the more puzzled he was. To add to his perplexities, he found, by that psychic action which makes one force influence another force widely remote, that another newspaper, like his own, was looking into the mysterious case. Wyndham was sorry that he had ever heard of it.

Flora Bellenden had by no means

forgotten Lord Fermor. Envy and ennui, two deadly foes to a woman's peace, haunted her. She had relished the fact that she stood, like a lion in the path, between ambitious mothers and daughters and Fermor's prospective coronet; and then had come this insignificant American, and—all was over. She grasped eagerly at the idea that something was wrong about Seymour, and was convinced, without investigation, that not only he, but his money, was tainted with villainy.

One afternoon, in December, Wyndham was passing Mrs. Bellenden's door just as she alighted from her brougham. She was looking very handsome, in her large, artificial way, in her velvet and furs, and Wyndham, who was no more proof than any other man against a good-looking woman, accepted her peremptory invitation to come in and have tea with her.

When they reached the drawing-room, Mrs. Bellenden at once began upon a subject which was plainly distasteful to Wyndham—the question as to whether Seymour were the man for whom the authorities and some amateurs had been hunting for twenty years. Wyndham parried Mrs. Bellenden very ably, but he could not get her off the subject. It shortened his visit, and when he rose Mrs. Bellenden was still plaguing him on the subject.

"Really," he said coolly, "I can't discuss this matter any further. I have received much kindness from Mr. Seymour and Madame Fontarini, and it would be an infamy for me to question Mr. Seymour's former life in any way."

After Wyndham had gone, Mrs. Bellenden's eye caught something upon the floor—a small newspaper, rolled into a wad. It was an American newspaper, and, as such, of no interest to Mrs. Bellenden; but, as she was about to throw it in the fire, her eye caught a marked column. She read it, and reread it, her face changing from sullen agitation to an expression of triumph.

Ten minutes later she rang for a

cab, and drove to a post office. In her hand she carried a little parcel, addressed to Lord Castlemaine, at Monte Carlo, which she registered as coming from A. N. Wyndham, who might be man, woman, or devil, as far as the post-office clerk knew. She herself dropped the newspaper in the post-office box, and returned home with a

sense of victory.

Wyndham returned to his hotel, where he dined, and then dropped in at his club. Only then did he miss his newspaper. He was deeply chagrined and even alarmed at its loss. He made such efforts as he could to recover it, feeling the hopelessness of it, and sent early next morning to Chester Street, to ask if he had left the newspaper there. In reply, he got a note from Mrs. Bellenden, saying no one in the house had seen it. A conviction instantly developed in Wyndham's mind that Mrs. Bellenden had the newspaper. He made up his mind to go to Chester Street again.

Lord Castlemaine had enjoyed Monte Carlo as a robust and intelligent pagan naturally would. It was his intention, originally, to return to England in time for Lord Fermor's wedding, which had been fixed for the fifteenth of January. But the dinners at Monte Carlo had been too good. Lord Castlemaine, for the first time in his life, felt that he had a pair of legs vulnerable to gout. With his usual prompt decision he left Monte Carlo, and, much to the disgust of his valet, went to a little place not far from Grenoble, where the air was good, the diet simple, and everybody went to bed at ten o'clock.

Within a week of Fermor's wedding, Lord Castlemaine's legs were propped up on a chair, and it looked as if it might be four weeks, instead of four days, before he could start. Nevertheless, he ordered preparations made for his leaving, going by way of Paris.

One morning, exactly seven days before the wedding day of Lord Fermor and Theodora, Lord Castlemaine received among a pile of letters and papers one addressed to him, in what was obviously a feigned handwriting. It was the last to be opened, and it contained a marked newspaper article. His valet, who was in the room, heard a suppressed exclamation, and looked toward his master. Lord Castlemaine's purple face had changed into a yellowish pallor. He made a motion with his hand, indicating the valet should withdraw, which he promptly proceeded to do.

Left alone, Lord Castlemaine collected his faculties together with that amazing quickness which made him a terror to both his friends and his enemies. He read the newspaper article—a long one—over half a dozen times. Then he put together many circumstances, some large and some very minute, and the conviction grew in his mind that Seymour had behind him a

prison record.

Fermor must certainly marry money, but Madame Fontarini was not the only rich woman in the world. The wedding must be stopped at any cost until Seymour's antecedents were investigated. Lord Castlemaine was a very firm believer in atavism, and the thought that he might have grandchildren with criminal tendencies was not agreeable to him. On the table at his hand were telegraph blanks and a railway guide. He wrote out rapidly a telegram to Fermor, and added: "Answer to Paris."

Then, ringing for his man, he ordered the dispatch sent off at once. With his usual energy, he directed that a compartment be engaged for him in the train which left for Paris that evening. The French doctor, appearing just then, made a vigorous protest against the move, but Lord Castlemaine

swept him aside.

That evening at ten, when the night train left, Lord Castlemaine was in his compartment, cursing his legs, propped up on the opposite seat; but they had not kept him from starting for Paris. So far from being worse, he was rather the better for the change, and the feeling that he would arrive in England in time to delay the marriage, and, if

necessary, prevent it, gave him an increase of his tremendous energy.

At eleven o'clock, he was trussed up with rugs and pillows, and fell into a sleep as calm as a baby's, the first sleep he had known for a month. The next thing he knew was a violent shock, and his valet was thrown across the compartment, and something at the same time seemed to strike his head. Then everything was forgotten. When he came to himself he was in a room in a little hotel of a town forty miles from Grenoble, and close to the spot where the accident had occurred.

As soon as he opened his eyes he remembered everything. A doctor was sitting by his bedside—the Grenoble doctor who had been sent for.

"An accident happened to the train, I presume," said Lord Castlemaine. "I think I have been unconscious some little time."

"Yes," answered the doctor, smiling, "but no serious injury whatever."

"I shall take the train to Paris tomorrow at latest," said Lord Castlemaine decisively. "I must be in England before the fifteenth of January."

"To-day is the fifteenth of January,"

replied the doctor.

A savage light shone in Lord Castlemaine's eyes and an imprecation burst from his lips. He was defeated by fate. The doctor, by way of encouragement, picked up an open telegram from the table, and read it. It ran:

Best wishes from Lord and Lady Fermor.

"There was great difficulty in communicating with Lord Fermor; he seems to have had neither letters nor telegrams from you, and thinks you are still at Monte Carlo. I got into communication with him only last night, and wired him that you were in the railway accident, and had been hurt on the head, but not otherwise injured, and that you have had each day a conscious interval, which you have probably forgotten. As you had told me your son was to have been married, I was very careful in what I wired him,

and it is fortunate I did so, because I think now your recovery will be rapid."

Lord Castlemaine lay back on his pillow, grinding his teeth; he hated defeat

On that day, Lord Fermor and Theodora had been quietly married in the drawing-room at King's Lyndon. The company was as small as might be. There was no best man, no wedding cake, none of the paraphernalia of a grand wedding. The guests consisted of Ashburton, Lady Susan Battle, Wyndham, Marsac and his wife, and Reyburn.

For the first time since the death of her child, Theodora wore a gown that was neither black nor white, but a faint blue. She looked extraordinarily girlish as she entered the room on her

father's arm.

When the short and simple ceremony was over, there was a wedding breakfast, also short and simple. All the guests left by the two o'clock train for London.

There was no occasion for a wedding tour or for a loan of a friend's house. About an hour after the departure of the guests, the bride and groom took Seymour to the station. He was off for a month in Scotland.

"One of the things, my dear," he said to Theodora, "which I have always wanted to do, was to explore Scotland in the winter. I couldn't do it on your account, but now that you are off my hands I am a free man."

"No, you are not, papa," said Theodora, with the note of affectionate decision which she used toward her father and which Fermor had never seen in an English daughter. "You may stay in Scotland one month exactly, then you are to come back, and, meanwhile, we shall make Barley Wood ready for you. Don't think you have achieved your liberty. I shall see you every day, and look after you just as I always have done."

When Seymour was aboard the train, and Lord and Lady Fermor were driving back to King's Lyndon, Fermor wondered if his wife would ever feel for him the passionate attachment she evidently had for her father. found it adorable in her, and thought he had never seen anything sweeter than the parting between the two.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lord Fermor had the common superstition among bachelors, that the instant he was married his wife would endeavor, by artful means, to change all of his bachelor habits, his mode of life, his friends, and everything belonging to and relating to him. But he was destined to an agreeable surprise.

After a honeymoon of three weeks, he discovered no effort on Theodora's part to change anything in his life. He loved King's Lyndon so well that nothing was easier or more natural to him than to fall into the ways of proprietor-He established himself once more in what had been his study, and afterward Seymour's. Reyburn attended him faithfully, as when he was a little boy and afterward when he returned, an Oxonian, home for the long

Seymour's rooms, announced Theodora in that surprising manner of an American woman who contemplates no opposition, would be kept intact for her father whenever he chose to visit

King's Lyndon,

As there were thirty-two other bedrooms in the King's Lyndon house, it was not likely that the Fermors would be pressed for room, and Fermor, himself, was secretly amused at the way in which one of the most desirable suites of rooms in his house was apportioned, without consulting him. Outdoor matters Theodora laid upon Fermor, with an apology for so doing.

"I have had to manage everything on the whole place," she said, "papa never would decide anything without referring to me, and so it became easier for me to manage directly; but it was a great burden, and I really didn't understand it very well, and so I am only too glad to be rid of it."

This, she said one evening three weeks after their marriage, when they were sitting, as usual, in the little yellow room. They were a very matterof-fact bride and bridegroom to outward appearances. Fermor was reading his newspaper and Theodora was cutting the leaves of a new book.

"Have you heard from Lord Castle-

maine to-day?" continued Theodora.
"No," replied Fermor, "not a line since his letter of a week ago, saving that he would arrive in England the first week in March. You must not be afraid of him; after all, there is nothing terrifying about him.'

Theodora opened her dark eyes in

calm amazement.

"I am not in the least afraid of Lord Castlemaine. I rather like him. Why should any one be afraid of another

person?"

Then she began to speak of a large party which they were arranging for Easter week, which fell on the last of March. It was to be a political party, and Theodora was to try her hand for the first time in being a political host-Fermor, however, had no fear of the outcome, after three weeks of Theodora's régime.

"Papa doesn't want to be here, then," said Theodora; "but, of course, I shan't

allow him to beg off."

"It will all be very fine," said Fermor; "I like the idea of once more receiving public men as my 'grandfather did when he was secretary of state for war. But, after all, I shall be glad when we can resume our quiet evenings alone together.

At that moment each felt almost too happy. The old superstition that when one reaches the ultimate height of love and joy, fate must be propiti-

ated, occurred to Fermor.

"Let us walk on the terrace," he said, "it is not cold."

"And the moon shines," answered

Theodora softly.

For an hour they strolled up and down slowly, watching the moon shimmering on the lake, and listening to those faint sounds of night that make the silence more silent. They spoke little; they were oppressed with the sense of their happiness.

That evening walk on the terrace

marked an epoch. It was the full revelation of their souls to each other.

Lord Castlemaine was one of the few philosophers who could live philo-The news of Fermor's sophically. marriage, on the heels of the newspaper story, and what it suggested, gave him a severe shock, but he rallied from it quickly. After all, Theodora herself was unexceptionable. The money was undoubtedly secure, and the one thing was to repudiate Seymour and hush the matter up as far as possible. The thing that troubled Lord Castlemaine most—the thought of his future grandchildren inheriting a strain of convict blood-was still in the air. There might not be children, or they might not resemble Seymour. The control of the will is a great factor in human affairs, and Lord Castlemaine set about making the most of the advantages and the least of the disadvantages of his son's marriage. He knew about the large party, including the prime minister, which was to spend the Easter week at King's Lyndon, but gave himself no uneasiness with regard to Theodora's bearing. Being an excellent judge of women, Lord Castlemaine saw in his daughter-in-law a real superiority to most women. thing, however, was certain—Seymour must be made to keep away from King's Lyndon.

These thoughts occupied Lord Castlemaine during his convalescence, which was rapid. In the first week in March he was quite well enough to travel, his gout was subdued, and he felt himself ten years younger for his winter at Monte Carlo. The identity of the person who had sent him the newspaper was quite unknown to Lord Castlemaine, until he was in the act of putting it in his dispatch box, and then his eye caught a memorandum scrawled on the inner page, in a handwriting distinctly un-English. It was: "Send this to J. F. W." Lord Castlemaine's mind instantly flew to Wyndham, the American journalist, and he recalled Wyndham's card: "Mr. John Frederick Wyndham." Lord Castlemaine was so convinced that he had found his man that the day he started for England he sent a telegram to Wyndham, asking him to call on an evening three days hence at Castlemaine House.

He made the journey by way of Paris, and arrived home in fine fettle.

CHAPTER XIV.

During the first evening at home, a card was brought to Lord Castlemaine, and he directed that the gentleman be shown in. The gentleman proved to be Wyndham.

After the usual greetings, Lord Castlemaine said:

"I believe you were present at Lord Fermor's wedding."

"Yes," answered Wyndham, "it was one of the few cheerful weddings I ever saw. Generally, the small wedding at home is about as gay as sitting the corre."

up with a corpse."

"It began as an arrangement," said Lord Castlemaine, "but I think I saw indications that something stronger, if not wiser, was developing between Lord Fermor and Madame Fontarini."

"I think I saw the same thing. Madame Fontarini has had a terrible experience in life. I think she was afraid of men, and would never have made the second marriage but for her father."

"Ah, yes."

"Then, when Fermor appeared, I am inclined to believe her inclination seconded her father's wishes."

"American fathers, I understand, are not very keen for their daughters to marry," said Lord Castlemaine, looking full into Wyndham's eyes, "but perhaps there was a reason in Seymour's case."

Lord Castlemaine epened the drawer of the library table, unlocked his portfolio, and handed Wyndham the newspaper which he had left in Mrs. Bellenden's house. One look at Wyndham's expressive face convinced Lord Castlemaine that Wyndham and himself harbored the same suspicions concerning Seymour.

"It is a very terrible and very pain-

ful affair," said Lord Castlemaine, quietly assuming that he and Wyndham thought alike. "The only thing is to try, if possible, to keep it quiet, and break up all association between Lady

Fermor and her father."

"It might be easy enough to keep it quiet," replied Wyndham, after a pause. "It all began twenty-three years ago, and nobody is particularly interested in bringing a man back to serve out his term after that length of time. However, if the authorities wanted him, they could very easily have him extradited; but as for breaking up all associations between Lady Fermor and her father, that I consider quite impossible."

A look came into Lord Castlemaine's eyes which Wyndham thought no woman would like to face. But Wyndham, himself, was troubled; he rose, and stood before Lord Castlemaine's chair.

"I can't tell you," he said, "how much this thing has distressed me. I grew up in this little town, and the story was familiar to me as a boy, and I conceived the idea of solving the mystery. Then, two years ago, when reports drifted back that this man still lived, and had made a great fortune, I took a sort of academic interest in it and made up my mind to trace the story."

"You have traced it only too well," said Lord Castlemaine, with a short

augh.

"So I fear. Mr. Seymour, himself, is as far removed from the type I imagined as any man could be. I admire his generosity, his simplicity, his devotion to his daughter. I have accepted his hospitality, and now, all at once, I am confronted with evidences which are very painful. At least, I have nothing to do with that newspaper story, and it embodies a great deal more than I ever knew."

"I wonder what considerate friend sent it to me," said Lord Castlemaine, putting the newspaper back in the portfolio and locking it, and the drawer,

too.

Wyndham thought a moment or two. "I remember mislaying an American

newspaper some weeks ago, leaving it in Mrs. Bellenden's house in Chester Street."

"And it was no doubt sent me by Mrs. Bellenden, confound her!" answered Lord Castlemaine.

Wyndham sat down again on the other side of the table, looking very unhappy, and leaned his head upon his hands.

"Some women are devils," he said.
"It was Mrs. Bellenden who put the first idea in my mind that Seymour is the man I was trying to place."

"After all," continued Lord Castlemaine, taking up his habitual mode of reasoning, "the whole thing is done, and we must make the best of it. Do you know where Seymour is, just now?"

"He went to Scotland after the wedding, and is due in London about this time. I can only say this, that in any effort to keep this quiet, you can count upon me, out of sincere regard for Mr. Seymour and Lady Fermor."

Presently Wyndham got up and went

away.

A touch of the bell brought a foot-

"Go to the next house," said Lord Castlemaine, "and inquire if Mr. Seymour is at home, and, if so, make Lord Castlemaine's compliments, and he would be very much obliged if Mr. Seymour could see Lord Castlemaine here for a few minutes this evening."

The footman went out, and Lord Castlemaine returned to his seat by the fire. It would be extremely fortunate if Seymour were at home. In five minutes, the footman returned, saying Mr. Seymour was at home, and would have the pleasure of waiting upon Lord Castlemaine.

In five minutes more, Seymour entered the room.

"You had a pretty bad accident, I understand," said Seymour.

"Not so very bad," replied Lord Castlemaine, "but it kept me quiet for more than a month, and cured my gout."

"You know, of course, that Lord Fermor did not receive the telegram about the accident, and supposed you

were in Paris until the day before the wedding came off. I wish you could have been present."

"It was my intention to be there, but I did not permanently recover consciousness until some hours after the ceremony had been performed," replied

Lord Castlemaine.

"It was really a most interesting occasion," said Seymour with a sort of simple enthusiasm. "You know, perhaps, that I have leased a small place -Barley Wood-close to King's Lyndon, and my daughter and Lord Fermor have been preparing it for me."

"Barley Wood is an insignificant place, but comfortable enough," said Lord Castlemaine quietly.

"So," replied Seymour, "now that my daughter is once more happy, I should lead a life of quietness, and even obscurity."

"I believe," said Lord Castlemaine slowly, "that you are capable of any

sacrifices for your daughter."
"I hope so," answered Seymour.
"Then," said Lord Castlemaine, "it

"Then," said Lord Castlemaine, "it might be well for you to have no further association with Lady Fermor."

Seymour shrank back in his chair. and the placid expression of his eyes changed instantly to one of anxiety and terror. Lord Castlemaine once more unlocked the drawer and portfolio, and took from it the newspaper, and laid it before Seymour, who raised it up with trembling hands, and began to read the marked column. When he laid it down on the table again, he had recovered his composure.

"It is every word true," he said calmly. "I have been looking for this

for twenty years past.'

"Then," said Lord Castlemaine, "you see the propriety of what I said just now with regard to Lady Fermor."

"Yes," replied Seymour in a low

voice, "I see it all now."

Seymour's look and words touched even Lord Castlemaine's hard heart, and he said with some trace of feel-

"Of course, we must keep everything, as far as possible, from Lady

Fermor."

"I am afraid that will be impossible," replied Seymour quietly. "I think you hardly understand the devoted intimacy in which my daughter and I have lived since she was ten years old. She is much cleverer than I, and I could never conceal anything from her except this," he said, laying his finger on the news-"She had great faith in me, and paper. when I have sometimes told her that I had something in my life to expiate, she always said it was a trifle-something no other man would bother about."

"It is very difficult, for a man to deceive a woman, though she deceives herself readily enough," replied Lord Castlemaine, "but Lady Fermor will, of course, see the necessity of holding no further intercourse with you."

Seymour remained silent for a few

"I am afraid," he said presently, "you don't fully understand my daughter. I don't think she will agree to give me up.'

"She must," shouted Lord Castlemaine, bringing his fist down suddenly

on the table.

Until then their voices had not risen

above the ordinary pitch.

"In any event," continued Lord Castlemaine savagely, "you can take your-

self off, and keep out of the way."
"I will do my best," replied Seymour humbly. "But I tell you in advance, my daughter has great tenacity of purpose, and the command of a great deal of money. I think she would make every effort to find me."

Lord Castlemaine's rage did not rob him of his wits, and in a little while he resumed: "Since you are willing to go away, we can now arrange it."

"Yes," replied Seymour, "but I should like once more to see my daughter."

"That is out of the question, if you are acting in good faith, and really mean to go away. You would be certain to betray something—Lady Fermor would be alarmed, and then the game would be up."

Seymour said nothing, but shrank

back again into his chair.

"Now," said Lord Castlemaine, "I

have met with great varieties of men in my life, but no one quite of your character and history. Tell me what really happened, apart from the lurid writing in this newspaper story.'

"I don't know how it happened any more than you do," replied Seymour tremulously. "I owed this man some money-a small amount-but a great deal to me at the time. I went to see him in his office in this little town in the East, and we had some words. He was a man of violent temper, though not bad-hearted, and struck at me, and I struck him back. It was not much of a blow-I never had a strong physique-but he fell over dead on the floor. Some crazy devil entered my mind, and I thought I would run away; but I had no money. I felt in his pockets, and took out his wallet, and ran to the little railway station. When I opened the wallet to pay for my ticket to New York, I found a great roll of money. I got on the train, and reached New York that night; went to a lodging house and tumbled into bed, and slept all night as if I had been drugged. Next morning I woke up, sane as ever in my life. I took the first train back to the place, surrendered myself, and gave up the money, less the little it cost me to go and return from New York. The man had been found dead in his office, but there was a question as to whether the blow had killed him. or whether he had died from an embolism from which he had long suffered. The loss of the money, though, was known immediately. I was tried at the next term of the court, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for involuntary manslaughter. I was made the warden's trusty. Do you know what that is?"

"Something like a ticket-of-leave

man," said Lord Castlemaine.

"Yes. I was employed in the warden's office, and allowed outside the prison limits, and to wear plain clothes. I had some friends who were very active in trying to get me a pardon from the governor. One day, just three months before my time was up, I drove into town in the warden's trap, and

went to the post office. In the mail was a letter for me saying that Theodora, then a little girl not ten years old, was ill, and the woman who attended her had deserted her. I had some money of my own to deposit in the warden's hands. I sent the warden's mail and the trap back by a boy, and took a train to the place where the child lay ill, three hundred miles away. I did it deliberately, and I would do the same thing again. The day after I left, a pardon arrived from the governor, but it could not apply, of course. A breach of faith on the part of a trusty is very severely punished. carried the child, when she was recovered, as far West as my money would take me. I found a cheap school for her, and went myself to the mining regions.

"People in Europe have thought me a great financier. I never was anything of the kind. I grew rich by a miracle. It is always the greenhorns who make the rich finds. I staked off the claim that turned out to be the richest ore-bearing section that was ever known in America. I made a clear profit of three million dollars, and I invested in safe interest-bearing securities, and let the income accumulate.

"I brought Theodora to Europe when she was twelve years old because I dared not stay in America. One of the worst phases of my punishment has been this living out of my own country. I have no friends here—I can't make any. I am an American, and I don't understand Europeans-few of us ever do. I dared not make friends with the few Americans I met, and my life was given over to my daughter. I am not a man of the world, as you know, and when Pietro Fontarini pretended to fall in love with my daughter when she was eighteen, and I thought she was in love with him, I was eager for the marriage, for I thought that this blow might come at any moment, and I wanted her to have a protector. Fontarini, however, was no protector for any woman." "Yes, Fontarini was a scoundrel,"

said Lord Castlemaine.

"My daughter never told me half her When Fontarini was gone, I knew that my daughter, with her grace and charm and the fortune I could give her, would have many opportunities to marry, and Lord Fermor seemed to me the right person. I became convinced that it was far more a love match than either one of them realized. Now, if my daughter can be kept from further suffering, I ask no more. I understand perfectly well your stake in the matter, and would be glad oi your advice.'

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This was considerably more reasonable than Lord Castlemaine had expected. He had looked for pleadings from Seymour, and had found on the contrary what seemed to him a perfectly rational submission.

"I have talked with Wyndham, the American journalist, who is a friend of yours and of Lady Fermor's, I be-lieve."

"Yes; Wyndham was one of the few Americans I ever dared to cultivate."

"And he had heard the story and was making quiet inquiries in Europe to find this lost trusty. It was not he, however, but another man who brought out this story. Now, stay here quietly in London until you hear from me. I shall go down to King's Lyndon tomorrow. I may not succeed in bringing Lady Fermor around to my views immediately, but in two or three days something must be settled."

"I will do as you suggest," replied Seymour, rising.

Lord Castlemaine, from one of those sudden impulses which remained from the wreck of virtue, held out his hand to Seymour, who, however, bowed with quiet dignity.

"I thank you," he said, "but I never offered my hand to any man as long as I was a trusty. I certainly should not do so now, when you know what I was and what I am.

Seymour walked across and out of the great room, and Lord Castlemaine heard the heavy street door shut after him. If only his daughter could prove as reasonable! Lord Castlemaine did not doubt, however, his power to coerce Lady Fermor in the end.

CHAPTER XV.

It was early March; one of those soft, bright days which seem the her-alds of the springtime. The rich brown earth was redolent, the gardens and lawns of King's Lyndon had a faint green haze upon them, which would soon be foliage.

Theodora, unlike Fermor, was, by nature, a child of laughter. Disappointment, grief, and shame had robbed her early of her gayety, but in the sunny air of happiness, it returned. Fermor was amazed and delighted at Theodora's radiant spirits, the airy humor she developed, her ready, rippling laugh-Theodora, herself, was not surprised. She was like a frozen fountain upon which the summer sun had shone warmly; it began once more its song and its dancing. They had returned from a ride, and when Fermor had gone to his study, Theodora changed her riding dress for one of a delicate and springlike green, and put on her head a hat crowned with roses. She went to the little yellow room, which seemed to her the very abode of joy. What happy hours had she known in that little room since her marriage! Hours so serene, so full of calm happiness, of deep, interior peace—and the long vista of the future was full of such halcyon days.

Suddenly, a tall figure crossed the terrace, and unceremoniously opened the door of the little yellow room where Theodora stood. It was Lord Castlemaine.

As he meant to bend Theodora to his will, he began by placating her. He kissed her on the cheek, complimenting her on her appearance, and declared Fermor to be a lucky dog. Theodora received this with smiling pleasure. She was always flattered by Lord Castlemaine's notice, and wished to please his exacting taste.

"I will send word to Lord Fermor that you are here," she said.
"No, pray don't. I wish to see you

particularly," replied Lord Castlemaine. "There is a grave matter to be settled, and I wish to talk with you

alone.'

Theodora surmised in a moment that this grave matter was also a painful matter. Her radiant face grew sober, as she replied quietly:

"I am a great believer in settling unpleasant things promptly. I suppose it is a part of my American blood."

As she spoke, she sat down close by the window, the strong morning light falling upon her black hair which accentuated the milky whiteness of her skin. Lord Castlemaine had never been in doubt concerning the marked distinction which was Theodora's real claim to beauty, and it had never been more obvious to him than at that moment.

He had meant to tell Theodora in a few words the newspaper story; but he concluded, as she would undoubtedly demand his sources of information, the best plan was to give the newspaper clipping to her in the first instance. He took it from his pocketbook, and handed it to her.

"Read this," he said. "It concerns

your father."

Theodora took the clipping.

She began reading, Lord Castlemaine watching her closely. He had expected Theodora to grow pale as soon as she realized that the person referred to was Seymour; instead of that, the red blood poured into her delicate cheeks until her face was scarlet. She read the long article through carefully to the end without showing the slightest tremor, although deeply flushed with indignation, and then rising and crossing the room, she struck a match, and before Lord Castlemaine could check her, dropped the clipping on the hearth and saw it shrivel up in the small and sudden flame. Then returning to Lord Castlemaine and looking him in the face with a courage which he had never seen in any woman's eyes, she said:

"What did you mean by showing me

that story?"

"Because it is true. Your father admits it."

Theodora remained silent, and a little smile of contempt appeared upon her red lips.

"I require my father's confirmation," she said, "before I would believe one

word of that."

"My dear Lady Fermor," he said, in the bland voice which always meant mischief with him, "what you believe or not is not the chief point; it is what is to be done. I had an interview with your father last night, and we discussed the matter thoroughly. He behaved, I must say, most commendably, and agreed that it would be best there be no further intercourse between him and you and Fermor. You can readily see that whatever your feelings might have been before your marriage, they must now conform to Fermor's wishes, duties, and position."

"I understand perfectly," replied Theodora in a soft, composed voice. "When I married Lord Fermor, I incurred obligations to his position. He also incurred some obligations toward me; one of them is that when my father—the best of men—is attacked and misrepresented, it is Lord Fermor's duty to stand by him. I feel sure he

will do it."

"That might be the case," replied Lord Castlemaine, "if there were any question concerning this charge against your father, but he gave me every detail of the story last night. He was sentenced to serve a term of two years in State's prison for involuntary manslaughter and larceny. He took advantage of a chance to get away from prison three months before the expiration of his term. You seem to be unconscious of the fact that if these circumstances had been known before your marriage to Lord Fermor, the marriage could not have taken place."

At last Lord Castlemaine had driven the brave blood from Theodora's face. She stood pale with anger and mortification—her eyes blazing and fixed upon Lord Castlemaine, The conviction that what he said was not without truth, and even justice, added a sharper pang. But it aroused all the resentment in Theodora's nature, and she was a woman capable of the deepest resentment.

Lord Castlemaine mistook her silence for the admission that she saw the ne-

cessity of yielding.

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"I think," he said, "you see how matters are, and it is absolutely out of the question that there can be any open association between you and your father. Of course, everything will be done to hush the matter up, and I presume it can be managed. But Seymour must remain in the strictest seclusion. I understand that he was to be included in the house party to meet the prime minister Easter week—that, of course, is quite impossible now."

"The question of who should be guests at King's Lyndon during Easter week is a point to be settled by Lord Fermor and myself," replied Theodora in a composed voice. "I am sorry that your first visit here should have brought with it such painful circumstances, but I must bid you good morn-

Theodora did not ask to be excused, or make any motion to leave the room, and Lord Castlemaine felt himself ordered out of the house. He had never in all his experience known an instance of a wife taking such a position, and that, too, without consulting her husband. If his words had made Theodora's delicate face burning red, hers made his purple with anger. He made her a bow without speaking, and walked out of the room. Theodora mechanically watched him walk the length of the terrace and enter the door at the farther end which led to Fermor's study.

She remained in the same position for she knew not how long. By the strange, intuitive perceptions of women, she began to realize, in spite of her protest, that the story was true. Her quick and retentive memory glanced backward, and she remembered that her father often spoke of expiation, and made veiled allusions to something in his past life which needed atonement. She had always believed it to be some trifling matter that oppressed a con-

science too tender.

Seymour had a constant and pathetic longing for America, and she, herself, had a strong desire to go back there after the death of Pietro Fontarini. Her father had, with much agitation, but without giving any specific reason, assured her of the impossibility of their ever returning. But that her father had not really committed a crime, that it had all been the frantic impulse of a moment, even the newspaper story proclaimed, and Theodora knew that Sevmour's life since then had been one

long expiation.

She had too much of sound sense to ignore Fermor's claims in the matter, and there was another persistent petitioner in Fermor's behalf-her own She was in love with Fermor; she had known it before she married him, and she knew it better still now. But the new love could not cast out the old. Her father had nothing in life but herself-his money profited him nothing but the pleasure of giving it away, especially to her-his generosity had been royal. The remembrance of his sublime affection, the long habit of passionate devotion to him, were upon her. It involved her in a fearful conflict, during which, however, one thing remained clear-that it would be impossible for her to abandon that tender, appealing father.

With these thoughts surging through heart and brain, Theodora knew not that half an hour had passed. Then Fermor entered the room and came up Agitation and emotion overto her. whelmed Theodora. Fermor represented to her protection and tenderness. She threw herself, pale, trembling, and

sobbing, into his arms.

Fermor led her to a sofa and soothed her until she was able to speak.

"My father has told me about it." he said. "I am afraid he was a little

abrupt with you."

"I resented it, of course," answered Theodora, "and I resented the manner in which Lord Castlemaine did it. It it had come to me from you it would have been far different."

"Perhaps it would have been better,"

replied Fermor.

"Is Lord Castlemaine here now?" asked Theodora.

"No," replied Fermor, with some embarrassment, "he told me that you had practically ordered him out of the house."

"I could not allow any one to speak to me in my own house as Lord Castle-maine did," replied Theodora. Fermor winced a little as she said

"my own house," and Theodora hastily added: "That is the way an American woman speaks of her house. It does not matter whether it is technically hers

or her husband's.

Theodora felt instinctively that this was one of those subtle points upon which the American and English mind can never agree, and she unconsciously raised another point at once by saying: "Lord Castlemaine assumed that we must withdraw the invitation of my father for Easter week."

"You must understand," said Fermor gently but with a certain coldness, "that the obligations of a family and a house, I must say, must be consid-

ered."

"I do understand it," replied Theodora, softly withdrawing from Fer-mor's arm, and looking with teardrenched eyes at him, "but are not the obligations of a child toward the best and kindest of fathers to be considered. too? It would have been a delicate thing for you to have said so much to me, but in Lord Castlemaine it was

most unjustifiable.

"With regard to my father coming to King's Lyndon, that will settle itself; he will not come. I cannot admit Lord Castlemaine's right to interfere in any way with my association with my father. The matter doesn't admit of any discussion. If my affection did not make me keep up my association with my father, my duty would. I should no more think of abandoning him than of abandoning you. I am not a slave,

but a wife."
"I think," said Fermor after a pause, "that we should particularly avoid any hasty action in this matter. It is not easy to decide these things within an

hour of their happening."

"I quite agree with you," answered Theodora after another pause, "but, meanwhile, I must see my father. I shall go up to London by the two o'clock train."

Fermor made no reply to this. Up to that time Theodora's calm way of doing things, the manner in which subjects which were usually yielded to a man were found to have been already settled, had amused and even pleased him. Now, however, when that principle applied to grave and serious matters, it had its inconveniences,

Her obstinacy concerning her father might cost him his political future. It might even cost him the calm domestic peace which had suddenly dawned upon him in the society of this sweet and charming creature. The prospect was

not an agreeable one.

"Theodora," he said, with grave sweetness, "let us not rashly throw away our happiness. Let us not ask impossible things of each other. I tell you frankly that the first motive of our marriage on my part was one of interest, but I swear to you now that for some time before our marriage I would have wished to marry you if you had not had five pounds to your fortune. I think you can't complain that I have not conceded all that you have claimed. But in this you must consider some one else besides your father. must consider that we owe something to the children which may come to us.

"And if we have children, they will owe something to us," replied Theodora, with the passionate stubbornness of a faithful woman. "If we should expend upon them years of care, oceans of money; if we should make countless sacrifices for them as my father made for me-and if they should happen to disapprove of us, we are to be thrown aside, trampled upon, insult-

ed, and then forgotten.'

"But it is not possible that any such contingency as this shall arise in our

"Certainly not; but other contingencies may arise, and we cannot judge now of the view that beings not now in existence will take of any subject whatever. You may call me superstitious if you like, but I believe, I feel in my heart, that if I desert the best of fathers now, and if I ever have a child, I shall reap retributive justice which will overtake me through that child. It is written that love with me shall always mean a tragedy. I thought when I married Pietro Fontarini that I loved him; and see how it ended! I know I loved my child; what a fate was his! I love my father, and it seems to have brought ruin upon him; and, now, you—" She rose, and Fermor rose,

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"I can make an answering confession to yours," she continued. "There never was any question of interest or rank with me. I think love came to me before it did to you. When a woman loves, there is but one limit to the sacrifices she will make, and that is to sacrifice some one else she loves. I cannot sacrifice my father; if I am too constant and faithful to him—well, it is my nature to be constant and faithful."

Fermor drew her to him, and kissed her on the lips. "Whatever happens, Theodora," he said, "we, at least, know that we love each other."

"Yes," replied Theodora, and returned his kiss.

CHAPTER XVI.

Only a few persons in this world have self-command enough to prevent family cataclysm from being known to the domestic staff. But not one of the army of servants suspected that there was a grave disagreement between Lord and Lady Fermor. Luncheon was at one o'clock, so that Theodora could easily make the train for London. Lord Fermor went with her to the station and put her in the compartment. Theodora told him that she would wire him at what hour to meet her, next day, as she would remain overnight at her father's house. She had made an excuse for not taking her maid, wishing to be entirely alone.

There were other passengers in the railway carriage, so that Lord and Lady Fermor's parting was made with a handshake and the waving of Theodora's handkerchief. Lord Fermor raised his hat to her as the train moved out of the station.

She reached London within an hour and, driving to the great house in Queen's Gate, went at once to her father's study, and knocked on his door, with the little familiar rap she had used since her childhood, and which was always met with a welcoming response. Theodora did not wait for an answer this time, but went in and placed her arms about her father's neck before he could rise from his chair. Then both of them burst into a passion of tears.

Seymour recovered himself first. "Why did you come?" he asked brokenly. "I am afraid it was against your husband's wishes."

"Did you think I could stay away?" asked Theodora. "What a heart you must think I have! When I remember from the time I was a little girl all your goodness to me—oh, how could you think I could forget it?"

"Theodora," said Seymour solemnly, raising his hand, "I swear to God, I never meant to do that man an injury, nor do I believe he meant to do me an injury. He struck at me first, and I struck him back. As for the money, I was crazy when I took it, and I restored every dollar of it. When it came to the running away from prison, I asked no man's pardon for that. I heard you, a little, helpless child, were ill and alone, and I went to you. I took my own money I had earned in prison. If I have done you any wrong, I have tried to atone for it."

"Hush, hush!" cried Theodora, weeping again. "You never did any human being a conscious wrong—as for the money you gave me, it was only a part of what you did for me. Look at the house in which I live, and Barley Wood, which you chose for yourself. It was like that always."

"Did Fermor object to your coming?" asked Seymour,

"He made no objection in words."

"You should not have come," said
Seymour; and to this Theodora an-

swered, as she would have answered in like case to Fermor:

"You would have come to me in the same circumstances."

"Have you seen Lord Castlemaine?"

asked Seymour anxiously.

"Yes," replied Theodora calmly, but in a tone which showed there had been a collision between Lord Castlemaine and herself. "I don't think Lord Castlemaine will again give me his opinion on any question concerning my personal relations with any one." Then, taking off her hat, Theodora said: "I have come to remain the night, and, as Fermor says truly, we must wait a few days and think carefully over what course to pursue.'

Seymour had recovered his patience and composure. Theodora's tenderness

soothed and consoled him.

That afternoon, Seymour insisted on Theodora going for a drive. When she stepped from the carriage at her father's door on her return, she saw Lord Castlemaine coming out of Castlemaine House. Theodora signaled him to approach. She held out her hand, and said quietly:

"Perhaps I was rash in what I said yesterday at King's Lyndon. I cannot apologize for it, but I can say that I

hope we may remain friends."

Lord Castlemaine had never been able to remain at enmity with a really clever and attractive woman. He felt a thoroughgoing contempt for the Flora Bellendens of this world, not because they broke the moral law, but because they were invariably women of bad taste. He grinned cheerfully, however, at Theodora, and, taking her small, outstretched hand, shook it cordially.

"You were rather hard on me yesterday," he said, "but I am of a forgiving nature. I am beginning to believe that the Americans are developing an entirely new, and not merely a composite, race, in which the women are sui generis. As far as I can see, Fermor has not had his own way once since he became engaged to be married to you. That is entirely foreign to British traditions. To make it still queerer, he seems to be perfectly happy and

satisfied-not a dejected captive like my brother-in-law, Joshua Battle. You seem to have tied Fermor with garlands of roses instead of iron chains like my sister, Lady Susan, has done with poor old Battle.

"I must be perfectly frank with you," she said. "I never contemplated at any moment, even if Lord Fermor should request it, the giving up my father-I cannot and I will not do that -but I will do anything else for Lord

Fermor's happiness or interest." "You speak softly, but you mean sternly," he said. "Remember, this question involves Fermor's whole personal and political future. It involves, also, the future of any children you

may have.

Lord Castlemaine lifted his hat and left her. Theodora went upstairs, carrying with her a heavy heart. Was she indeed a millstone around Fermor's neck? He might have married an English woman, who could have brought him all the money he needed, and who would have been of a nature and temperament to help, rather than hinder, him.

CHAPTER XVII.

Theodora walked straight to the library, expecting to see her father there. Instead, Ashburton was standing, his back to the fire, in the national attitude of an Englishman. When Theodora recognized him, her sad, preoccupied manner changed, and she greeted him warmly. She would have liked to pour out to him all her perplexities, but she was restrained by the feeling that Lord Fermor would not like her to consult Ashburton in any matter between Fermor and herself.

Ashburton, however, at once opened

the subject.

"Mr. Seymour sent for me this morning," he said, "and told me the painful story of his life. I felt deeply for him, for you, and for Lord Fer-

"I am glad my father sent for you," she said, "you are so practical, so clearheaded-you see things as they are."

"I try to, anyway," replied Ashbur-

"I found your father predetermined to return to America and serve the three months' term in prison, and accept any other penalty which he might have incurred. That was so radical a measure that I persuaded him to send for Wyndham, who might give us the American view of things. He is here now with your father in his private room. Wyndham's first impression was that a pardon might still be secured from the governor of the State, but it would have to be on your application. Wyndham tells me that in America the plea of a man for mercy is not generally heeded, but the plea of a woman is extremely likely to prevail."

"I would go to America at once," replied Theodora, and then, remembering that Ashburton was an Englishman, she added: "I would ask Lord Fermor's consent, and I am sure he would give it. One thing, however, must be understood. I cannot give up my father, or forbid him my house, or fail to go to see him. My father, as you know, is the last person on earth to make any claim. He would efface himself, if possible; but I believe at his time of life, and feeble as he is growing, a final separation from me would kill him."

"You are right," replied Ashburton earnestly. "All the forces against your father are those of interest. He has been, I know, the best of fathers to you. He is old, he is feeble, he is broken-hearted."

Just then the door opened, and Wyndham entered. He came up to Theodora, and, taking her hand, said, with tears in his eyes:

"When I think that it was through me all this distress has come upon you and Mr. Seymour, it is so painful! Mr. Seymour told me of the newspaper which was sent to Lord Castlemaine. I recalled having left that newspaper at Mrs. Bellenden's house in Chester Street."

Theodora's face changed at the mention of Mrs. Bellenden. Lord Fermor had never once spoken Mrs. Bellenden's name to his wife, and this very

caution on his part, together with Mrs. Bellenden's attitude toward herself, had made Theodora's quick wit surmise that there had been some link in the past between her husband and Mrs. Bellenden.

Theodora was to return to King's Lyndon by the five-o'clock train, which gave her only half an hour to be with her father. Ashburton and Wyndham arranged to go with her to the station, and she went into her father's room to spend the last half hour with him. He was sitting in his great armchair, and looked old and shriveled and brokenhearted. Theodora knelt by him, and put her arms about him as if he were a child. Always the relations of father and daughter had been reversed between them. It was Theodora who now assumed a protecting tenderness over her father.

"Dearest papa," she said, "Lord Fermor will not require that I shall give you up, and if he did I could not do

"That was what I told Lord Castlemaine," replied Seymour, his pale, old face working with emotion. "I told him it would not be worth while for him to forbid you to come to me."

"It would be perfectly useless, and if you tried to hide yourself from me, I would search the whole world over for my father."

"I told Lord Castlemaine that, too. But, Theodora, are you acting right by your husband and his family?"

"Yes, I am doing what is right."
"I am afraid, my dear, that you are doing it because you want to do it."

"Perhaps so," replied Theodora, rising. "I could not abandon you, any more than you could abandon me. There, you have it."

Then she drew her chair up to him and told him of Lord Fermor's kindness, indulgence, and of her conviction that he would think as she did on the subject. She was not so confident as she claimed to be, but she succeeded in convincing Seymour, whose spirits perceptibly improved.

When it was time for Theodora to go to the train, the big landau came to the door, and Theodora, with Wyndham and Ashburton, entered it. There was but little time at the huge and crowded station. Wyndham and Ashburton barely managed to thrust Theodora into a compartment ten seconds before the train moved off. Theodora had the compartment to herself. She sat back in the corner, wearied with the racking emotions of the last twen-

ty-four hours.

As the train sped out of London, darkness and fog were left behind, and the dying glow of the late March afternoon lay upon the rich and beautiful landscape. The sunshine entered into Theodora's soul. After all, she was returning to the man she loved, and he was her husband. Everything could be arranged—everything must be arranged. It was impossible that a husband and wife who loved each other, and who were experienced enough to be discreet, should throw away their happiness.

It was quite dark when the train drew into the little station at King's Lyndon. Lord Fermor was waiting for his wife, and put her at once into his motor. It was closed, so that they were quite alone. Theodora, like many women, was not less attractive for the stress of feeling. The faint color, which was unusual with her, glowed in her cheeks. She was glad to be once more with Fermor, and told him so. Fermor, in his cool English way, was equally pleased to have his wife back.

After dinner, Fermor and Theodora went into the little vellow room, where Theodora had established the habit of playing her violin while Lord Fermor smoked. He was passionately fond of music, and at no time were Theodora's charms more powerful with him than when standing in the glow of lamp and fire. She showed the exquisite grace which violin playing often develops in a woman. He had never ceased to wonder at the strength in her delicate arms and hands, but that was the way in everything about her. This delicate creature had the steady resolution of a dozen tall and majestic Lady Susan Battles.

It was Theodora's fixed intention to charm Lord Fermor at that moment, and she succeeded. Never had she played better; never had she chosen with more art what would please him in the way of soft and emotional music. Fermor realized that it would be difficult to refuse this woman anything, but difficulties do not mean impossibilities to an Englishman. Of one thing, however, he was quite sure, that nothing could impair the love and respect he felt for his wife.

When Fermor's cigar was finished, and Theodora had played a last cadenza, she laid down her violin, and came and sat down on the sofa by him. She laid her head on his shoulder, and received his praise and kisses; then the

real battle began.

"I want to tell you all that happened in London," she said, looking at him with that peculiarly fascinating gaze which was hers. "I told my father what he knew before, that I could no more give him up than he could give

me up.

"My dear Theodora," said Fermor with calm good humor, "you will act as all true women act—from their hearts. If I, instead of your father, were concerned, you would do the same for me. Let us say no more about it. You will consider my interests, no doubt, but I can hardly expect you to take the same view as an English woman would. I shall love you just as much, though, and perhaps a trifle more."

Fermor took Theodora's hand, but she withdrew a little, and her face assumed the kind of statuesque repose which was a sure indication of her dis-

pleasure.

"I discovered, quite by accident, how the newspaper was sent to Lord Castlemaine. You will recall that Lord Castlemaine said to me that if he had known this in time he would certainly have tried to prevent our marriage."

"My father is a brute," said Fermor

quickly,

"The newspaper was left—in Chester Street—and was sent anonymously to Lord Castlemaine."

Theodora's suppressed indignation

communicated itself to Fermor, who mumbled something between his teeth, which Theodora understood to be ob-

jurgations of Mrs. Bellenden.

"I beg you will understand," he said to Theodora, "that, as far as that woman is concerned, she has not the slightest claim upon my consideration. take upon myself the whole blame in the beginning, as a gentleman must, but the last five years I paid for my folly. I thought I had paid enough for it, but it seems the price is to be exacted of you, too. I am sorry-I apologize for it, but I can't help it."

Having brought Fermor down into the dust, so to speak, Theodora, like a true woman, proceeded to forgive him. Her face changed, her eyes filled with

"It is past," she said, "let us never speak of it again."

Then, there was the truce of love.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lord Fermor meant to signalize his entrance into public life and the rehabilitation of King's Lyndon by entertaining a large political party at Easter. There were some additional guests -Marsac and his wife; Wyndham, and two of the Battle girls. Lord Castlemaine, of course, was to be of the party, and before Theodora could mention it, Fermor had put down Seymour's name among the list of guests. This was in February, before the painful facts concerning Seymour had been revealed. Seymour did not care for such things, but Theodora had written him that he must stay at least one night under the roof of King's Lyndon with her other guests, and as a compliment to Lord Fermor and herself, and after that, he would be allowed to retire to Barley Wood.

Nothing had been said of this invitation, but Theodora's mind was made up, as a part of the pact with her conscience, that she would not insist on Seymour's presence at the house party, and she so told Fermor. He replied with kindness, that perhaps for Sey-mour's own sake, it would be best to let him remain at Barley Wood, which would certainly be his preference.

The preparation for entertaining a party of thirty guests for three days took up much of Theodora's time. The presence of the prime minister and his wife was to be made a political occa-A meeting in the interests of the party was to be held in the market town on Easter Monday, when the prime minister and Fermor, and two or three of the other guests, were to

address a party meeting.

Theodora, at first, had entered into these plans with enthusiasm. She felt like a girl going to her first ball, so new to her were happiness and a heart free from care. All the arrangements had been completely and skillfully made, but the terrible revelations of the last few days had driven it all out of Theodora's mind. She was recalled to it, however, as the day approached. It was her habit to write to her father daily, and she had often alluded to his coming down at Easter, fearing that, at the last, he might beg off. Now, however, she made no mention of the Easter party, and secretly hoped that her father would, of himself, decline to come. This hope was realized within three days of her return from London.

One morning she went into Fermor's study and laid before him a letter from Seymour. It was plain and unstudied, like Seymour himself, and not the letter of an educated man, but Theodora thought it the more touching.

letter ran:

I can't come to you, my darling Theodora I know that you and Lord Fermor would treat me kindly and would never ask me to take a back seat, but all the same it is not right for me to go; and to tell you the truth, I never did want to be at King's Lyndon during the Easter party. I am acting on the advice of Major Ashburton and Mr. Wyndyndd want want was the same of the same was ham by staying in London in my house, and I think a crisis will come pretty soon. Mr. Wyndham has been writing to America to influential men he knows. He says the governor will grant me a pardon. When I think of what I have brought on you, I can't sleep at all.

Theodora attempted to read the letter to Fermor, but broke down, weeping. Fermor soothed her, and encouraged her to go up to London next day for a few hours to see her father.

This Theodora did, and was shocked to see the change in Seymour. He looked haggard beyond belief, and was more like a man of eighty than one of sixty. But he did not lack for attention. Ashburton and Wyndham, being devoted in their kindness to him, visited him daily.

He brightened up under Theodora's visit and her promise to come again in a few days, and Theodora returned

home.

It was arranged that during the three days when Wyndham would be a guest at King's Lyndon that Ashburton, who had no taste for such parties and had asked to come at some other time, should see Seymour daily. Theodora's concern about her father touched Fermor, and he voluntarily went up to London twice to see Seymour, and once with Theodora. The passionate affection between father and daughter was moving enough to Fermor, but through it all, ran a real and painful apprehension. He was, like Lord Castlemaine, a firm believer in atavism, and the element of weakness in Seymour's character, the want of resolution which had made him a criminal, was a dangerous strain to introduce into a family. He yearned for children, but if they were given him, especially sons, there would always be that unspoken fear that, along with Seymour's gentleness and humility, might come that fatal weakness,

Lord Castlemaine was not a good man to inherit from, but Fermor knew that a man who was all resolution was less dangerous as a progenitor than a man who was absolutely without resolution. If Seymour had been a strong man, he might have saved Theodora much of what she had suffered with Pietro Fontarini. Nevertheless, Fermor, although troubled by these thoughts, was all kindness and respect toward Seymour. In return, Seymour was almost piteous in his thanks.

Theodora had herself written a pretty note to Lord Castlemaine, asking him to come to King's Lyndon whenever he liked, but especially before the great party arrived, and had received

a good-humored reply.

Good Friday dawned in rain and darkness, and it was as if the world had taken a sudden plunge backward into winter. In the afternoon, as Theodora was passing along the hall, she looked out of the window, and, to her surprise, she saw her father on the terrace. Although it was raining, his head was bare, and he stood looking about him with a strange uncertainty. Before the footman could reach the door, Theodora ran and opened it, and drew her father within the hall. He had on no greatcoat, and was soaked with rain. He put his arms about Theodora, and kissed her passionately. Theodora, accustomed to think and act promptly, saw at a glance that something was wrong with Seymour, and, after telling the footman to ask Lord Fermor to come to her at once, led Seymour into the little yellow room where the fire was sparkling. Fermor came in immediately, and Seymour shook hands warmly with him, and then turned to Theodora.

"I am glad that Lord Fermor has come," he said. "I wanted to talk to him on some business matters. He will, no doubt, stay to dinner with us."

Seymour's eyes had in them a strange look of distress, and he seemed struggling to recollect himself. Theodora glanced at Fermor. There was evidently something quite wrong with Seymour. Fermor rang the bell, and when the footman came, directed a dressing gown and slippers to be brought at once to Mr. Seymour. Theodora was, meanwhile, getting Seymour's coat off him against his feeble protest.

"My dear Theodora," he was saying, "I don't see why you do this. It was never my habit, even in my roughest days, to appear before ladies like this. My child, you must not do it—at any rate, before Lord Fermor, who is our

guest."

"Never mind, Mr. Seymour," said Fermor, "your coat is a little wet, and we think it best that you should change it. I suppose you lost your greatcoat in the train,"

"I have not been in the train at all," said Seymour, looking with a puzzled expression from Fermor to Theodora, "I only came from my room a little while ago into my daughter's sitting room. I did not know that you were here."

Theodora took her little lace handkerchief and passed it over Seymour's white hair wet with the rain. He took her hand and held it like another *Lear* once more in the presence of his *Cordclia*. Tears were dropping upon Theodora's cheeks, but she tried to speak cheerfully.

"Really, papa, you are not fit to be trusted alone. Come—put your feet to the fire, while I take off your shoes."

She knelt down, took off Seymour's sodden shoes, and rubbed his chilled feet. Fermor went out of the room for a moment, and came back again and whispered to Theodora: "Rolfe will be here in ten minutes."

Doctor Rolfe was the physician whose house was at the end of the village nearest the park gates of King's Lyndon. It was plain that Seymour was out of his mind, and yet dimly realized that something was amiss. He took Theodora's left hand, and, looking at the third finger, said:

"Why are you wearing a wedding ring? I saw you myself when you took the wedding ring of that scoundrel, Pietro Fontarini, from your hand, and threw it into the fire. Is it possible that you have married again without telling me?"

"You remember that I married Lord Fermor two months ago," said Theodora gently.

"No, my dear," replied Seymour, with a look of distress, "I don't seem to remember anything. Some time ago I was living in London, and you used to come to see me, but then I don't know how it happened, I find to-day that I am living at King's Lyndon and —I can't understand it."

It was piteous to hear him, and still more piteous to see Theodora's tender

ministrations. The one thing clear in Seymour's shattered mind was that Theodora still loved him—that she was still his child. In a quarter of an hour Doctor Rolfe walked in—a keen-eyed man with a capacity for taking things in quickly. He asked Seymour a few questions to test his memory, which seemed defective, rather than absolutely gone; he was conscious of his inability to answer correctly, and would say pathetically: "I never forgot those things before." The doctor made Seymour work his fingers, which he did with ease, and then said to him cheerfully:

"Come, Mr. Seymour, I think you had better take a nap now, and you will feel better to-morrow morning."

Seymour yielded at once, and was led upstairs and put to bed in his old room. He dropped off at once into sleep, and Theodora left Reyburn watching him, and went downstairs with the doctor to her husband's study.

"It is not much so far," said Doctor Rolfe, "there is a slight blood clot on the brain. There are at present no serious symptoms, and a day's quiet and the mustard bath I gave Mr. Seymour may restore him perfectly."

"It may be the beginning of the end," said Theodora in a low voice.

Doctor Rolfe made no reply except to leave some simple directions, and went away saying he would return in the evening.

The spectacle of pure devotion in a woman is peculiarly appealing to a normal man, if that devotion is lavished upon a legitimate object. Fermor had never admired Theodora more than in her affectionate solicitude for her stricken father. She established herself in the room next Seymour's, ready to answer his slightest call, although Reyburn and a manservant were watching. She was not, however, unmindful of Fermor, and said to him:

"You can have an evening of uninterrupted reading, as I don't expect you to remain here with me. I will come down to dinner."

Fermor returned to his study, where work awaited him.

At dinner time, Seymour was still half sleeping and apparently comfortable. Theodora asked to be excused from dressing for dinner, and came down in the same simple black gown she had worn during the day according to the custom she had acquired of the Roman ladies of wearing black on Good Friday. She strove to be cheerful, especially after Doctor Rolfe's evening visit, when he brought with him a white-capped nurse. The nurse, however, found her office a sinecure, as Theodora remained in the next room that night, and many times went in to see how her father fared.

When Theodora came down to breakfast, Seymour was up and dressed by the doctor's permission, and seemed quite normal. Nevertheless, Theodora felt that King's Lyndon was not the place for him at the time. She understood very well that the house party was not so much a matter of pleasure as one of much political importance to Fermor. The presence of the prime minister meant much, and the visit had been planned with a view to its political effect in a doubtful division. Theodora had already determined upon her course of conduct, and told Fermor so. It was among the surprises of his American wife that she always seemed to think and act for herself, and then to inform him of her decision, and as the thing generally was sensible no objection could be made.

She said to Fermor, sitting by the table in his study, at which he was

looking over his letters:

"I think my father is in no condition to remain at King's Lyndon, but I can't let him go up to London. It seems to me the best thing is to take him over to Barley Wood, where Doctor Rolfe will be near, and I can see him twice a day. Reyburn will go with him, and take the best care of him. My mind will then be quite at rest."

"The plan seems good to me," answered Fermor. "I know you could not be happy unless you were near your father in his present state, so if Rolfe consents we can take Mr. Sey-

mour over this morning.'

At that moment Doctor Rolfe entered, and approved highly of the plan,

"We can never quite tell about patients in Mr. Seymour's condition," he said, "but he must have rest and quiet, and he will not have either, unless he knows Lady Fermor is near him."

When Theodora proposed the plan to her father, telling him that a large party was expected at King's Lyndon, he agreed at once. He made no allusion to the painful disclosures of the last few days, and both Theodora and Fermor suspected that he had no mem-

ory of them.

Theodora and Fermor drove with him in an open carriage to Barley Wood. It was a pretty little place, and Seymour seemed infinitely pleased at being there and near Theodora. The day, like the preceding one, was wet and gloomy, but Theodora's spirits were much improved. If her father had been really ill, she felt it impossible that she could have carried through the gayeties of the house party as planned, and yet to have postponed them would have been a detriment to Fermor.

And Fermor's interests, as well as Fermor himself, were first in the heart

of Theodora.

CHAPTER XIX.

The guests were to arrive by train, between four and six o'clock, but Lord Castlemaine came down by the noon train from London in time for luncheon.

Theodora received him pleasantly and cordially, but her air of making a graceful concession secretly amused him. He had never imagined himself placed in the position of being amiably

tolerated.

At four o'clock, Theodora, after having taken a final survey of the rooms prepared in the bachelor's wing and the state suite for the prime minister and his wife and the bedrooms for the other guests, came down the stairs to be ready to receive them. Fermor and Lord Castlemaine were standing in the great hall, where a fire blazing in

the vast hearth made the dull day bright. When Theodora stepped down the grand staircase, her soft, white gown trailing on the crimson carpet which deadened her light footfall, her quick glance caught sight of her father huddled in a chair at the end of the hall. Lord Castlemaine was saying angrily to Fermor:

"This is arrant nonsense. The fellow's mind is gone, and to have him here now is not only ridiculous but He ought to be under re-

straint.'

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At that moment Seymour rose and tottered forward, and laid his arm ap-

pealingly on Fermor's.
"Don't turn me out," he pleaded, "I want to be with my daughter. Something I know is wrong with my brain, but if I am under the same roof with her, she can keep me quiet. It is so cold at Barley Wood and so lonely."

Fermor took Seymour kindly by the

arm and said:

"You shall not be turned out."

Lord Castlemaine's face became a deep purple, and he said furiously to Fermor:

So you propose to entertain, with the prime minister, a man out of his head who is a criminal besides! That, together with your subservience to your wife, will not make you a very valuable acquisition to your party in the House!

Fermor's face flushed deeply, and father and son looked each other in the eyes with an antagonism which

was almost enmity.

Theodora had sped down the stairs, and her father, on seeing her, uttered a cry of joy, and almost fell' into her Then Reyburn suddenly aparms.

"I couldn't keep him back, sir," she said breathlessly. "We watched him all we could, and I even tried to hold him when he broke away from me, and we didn't know where he had gone for half an hour, and then I got in the pony cart and came here."

Fermor taking Seymour by one arm, while Theodora held him tenderly by the other, with Reyburn following, they carried him upstairs to the room in the clock tower, the most remote and secluded in the house. Seymour, meanwhile, became perfectly calm and tractable, and agreed to remain quietly with Reyburn in the clock tower rooms.

As Fermor and Theodora went out of the room, they met Doctor Rolfe

hurrying along the corridor.

"I went over to Barley Wood to see Mr. Seymour," he said, "and found that he was missing, and they thought he had come here, as I find he has.

Doctor Rolfe went into Seymour's room, while Fermor and Theodora remained outside. Theodora was trembling with excitement. The condition of her father, the apprehension that she was injuring her husband, and anger against Lord Castlemaine, all struggled within her; and she expressed this in broken words to Fermor. If she had ever felt a doubt of his love before it would have vanished then. Fermor realized all that was passing in her heart, and all he desired was that she should have the strength to go through the three days before her. At any moment the first installment of guests might arrive.

In a moment or two, Doctor Rolfe came out.

"I think," he said, "Mr. Seymour will be perfectly quiet as long as Lady Fermor is near him. He has undoubtedly had a slight stroke, from which he may recover entirely, or another may follow. We cannot tell. Keep him quiet and satisfied, and Lady Fermor is the only person who can do that. I am coming to see him twice a day for the present."

At that moment the sound of wheels upon the gravel was heard, and Theodora, without an instant's preparation, descended to the hall where she received her guests, the first to arrive

being the prime minister.

Much curiosity had been felt by those of the invited guests, including the prime minister and his wife, who had never met Theodora, as to Fermor's American wife. The result of the first afternoon and dinner and evening afterward was of a mixed character. There could not be the slightest doubt of Theodora's grace, charm, and exquisite gowns, but she was entirely too self-possessed. She had the air of having been born to her position, instead of having acquired it, and she lacked that deprecatory spirit of an English woman who shows her gratitude for her elevation.

The ladies found her "singular," as they conferred together in their boudoirs at midnight. She had not, even at dinner, appeared in any jewels, although it was supposed she had many splendid ones, and the Castlemaine family jewels were good ones. There was no doubt that she was immensely successful with the men, which did not conduce to her popularity with the

women.

Lord Castlemaine confidently expected an exhibition of temper or coldness on Theodora's part toward himself, but was somewhat staggered to find her all grace and sweetness. He began to have a glimmer of why it was that Theodora had carried things so irresistibly, not with a high hand but with a gentle hand, as far as Fermor went. She had clearly carried her point with regard to her father, who at that moment was in the tower room. Lord Castlemaine heard Theodora calmly explain to the prime minister that her father had not been well for several days, and, therefore, would keep his room.

The prime minister received this serene announcement with equal composure. He was prepared for any sensational development where Americans were concerned. He disliked them cordially; but he was a statesman, and had made it a point during his whole political career never to offend them.

At midnight, when the guests had separated, Fermor went to Theodora's boudoir. She had just returned from her father's room, and had seen him sleeping quietly. The strain of the day had been great, and she was lying back in a great chair, pale and dejected, but with unabated courage. Her evening gown, a splendid creation in blue and gold, seemed at odds with her pallor and sadness. She rose and threw

herself into Fermor's arms, and thanked him, as only a woman can, for his unfailing support during that trying day. Fermor felt a sense of triumph. This fearless creature, who defied Lord Castlemaine, and met as an equal the prime minister, whose family had held power since Agincourt and Crécy, showed to him the sweetest gratitude, the tenderest affection. He could not exactly call it deference, but one does not look for deference from a woman who has been taught her sovereignty from the beginning.

Theodora assured Fermor that she was in no way forgetful of his inter-

ests.

"I know what it means, those terrible newspaper articles," she said, laying her cheek against her husband's, and alluding to stories about her father which, in spite of all their precautions, had found their way into the papers. "Ever since Lord Castlemaine told me about my father it has been like a knife in my heart that I have done you more harm than good. I would die

rather than harm you."

What could any man who loved a woman like Theodora say to such words? It was true that she might have harmed him politically and temporarily, but she had bestowed upon him the glorious treasure of her love; she had restored to him the place he loved with an Englishman's passionate attachment to the land; she had recreated for him the splendor of womanhood, which had been lowered by his knowledge of Flora Bellenden.

The next day embraced the well-ordered programme of a large party in a great house. It was Easter Sunday, and they all attended the services in

the parish church.

At two o'clock, luncheon was served

in the great dining hall.

Just as the party was assembled, and Theodora was about to take her seat, with the prime minister on her right, the door at the farther end opened and Seymour entered. He looked perfectly well and clear-headed; was scrupulously dressed, and, approaching Theodora, said to her in his natural voice;

"I felt so much better to-day, my dear, that I determined to give myself the pleasure of appearing at luncheon."

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A terrible silence fell upon all. Theodora felt that every eye was fixed upon her, but above all, Lord Castlemaine's, with a savage mixture of fury and laughter. It was one of the most trying moments of Theodora's life, and a moment when only courage could save her. She spoke calmly and affectionately to her father, introduced him to the prime minister, who stood not two feet away, his hand on the back of There was no place for the chair. Seymour at the table, but Theodora's eve caught Wyndham's. The next instant Wyndham melted away, as it were, and Seymour took his place. Then every one sat down, and conversation began with nervous briskness.

The prime minister, whom neither a long lease of power nor cordial dislike of Americans had wholly robbed of his kindness of heart, felt a real sympathy for Theodora. He thought Fermor very unwise in permitting Seymour's presence at King's Lyndon, and concluded that Theodora had simply befooled her husband into permitting Seymour, an escaped convict, to appear at the place, and he felt a curious sensation at sitting at the same table with him. But out of pure pity for Theodora, the prime minister went up to Seymour after luncheon was over, and made a civil inquiry after his To this Seymour replied quite rationally. Then, catching sight of Lord Castlemaine, Seymour went up to him as if to speak, but Lord Castlemaine deliberately turned his back, and walked off in another direction. Fermor came up, and, taking Seymour by the arm, led him away.

The day was calm and bright, and the men were to smoke out on the terrace. Theodora went up to the prime minister and said with a tremulous

smile:

"Will you come into the conservatory and let me show you my Easter lilies? Don't throw away your cigar; I will allow you to smoke."

The prime minister agreed. He was

magnanimous toward this injudicious woman who, he considered, would wreck the interests of his party in that division of Midlandshire, and he went with her cheerfully enough. When they had traversed the long, warm, glass gallery, brilliant with sunshine and heavy with the perfume of flowers, they came to the farther end where, under darkened glass, a mass of palms made a green solitude. Theodora suddenly turned to the prime minister, and put her hand impulsively in his, and said to him:

"How can I ever thank you enough for what you did to-day? I know all about the terrible stories printed about my father. He is an innocent man, and that will be proved when all the circumstances are known. Much as I love him, I did not mean to have him here, but his memory has been shattered in the last few days, and he does not seem always to know what he is doing."

The prime minister was not the man to disregard the appeal of an attractive

woman.

"I feel deepest sympathy for you. I admired your self-possession, and you may count on me as a friend."

As the prime minister said this, he felt an inward chuckle of amusement at himself. How great is the power of a charming woman! He reflected if he were married to Theodora, he might prove as great a fool as he reckoned

Fermor to be.

When the prime minister and Theodora reappeared upon the terrace in deep and amicable conversation, Lord Castlemaine's grim reflection was that the prime minister had been very successfully bamboozled by Theodora's dark eyes. Theodora spoke to Lord Castlemaine naturally and politely, but that gentleman had a very true suspicion that matters were by no means settled between them.

Nothing escaped Fermor, and Theodora's civility to his father and the unundoubted good will of the prime minister toward her assured him that everything would go smoothly during the momentous visit. He said this to Theodora the first time they were alone

together in the evening before dinner. He was becoming acquainted with

a new phase of his wife's character. "Do you suppose," she said, with a kind of soft haughtiness which was peculiarly hers, "that anything Lord Castlemaine could say or do would discompose me in our own house?"

"Men and women are usually afraid of my father," replied Fermor, smiling; "he acknowledges very few re-

straints.

"People who don't acknowledge restraints should be treated as children,'

said Theodora.

Then the husband and wife talked together frankly and with mutual sympathy of the strange and embarrassing incidents of the day, which had turned out better than either could have hoped.

CHAPTER XX.

In the evening, Theodora, having dressed early, went down into the drawing-room, where her guests were to assemble. Lord Castlemaine was there in advance of her. As usual, Theodora wore few ornaments, and on her black hair was a coronet of violets, with their fresh green leaves, and a wreath of violets extended across the front of her bodice.

Lord Castlemaine, who was standing by the fireplace as Theodora came up,

asked promptly:

"Why don't you wear some diamonds, like the other women? would be a very proper occasion to wear the Castlemaine necklace and

"I don't think jewels suit my style," replied Theodora calmly. "They are not really becoming to many women. They suit the large English type bet-

ter than any other.

"True," replied Lord Castlemaine. "The insignificant American figure and features do not suit tiaras, but now that you are an English woman you ought to follow English customs."

This onslaught did not discompose

Theodora.

"I do," she replied, "but a woman's

dress is too strictly personal to be gov-

erned by any rule.

"It is a sort of snub to the other women that you should not wear jewels, and particularly family jewels.' Lord Castlemaine was growing fiercer in his eye and grin.

"When Lord Fermor requests it, then it will be time enough," was Theodora's answer in a chilling tone.

"Of course," continued Lord Castlemaine, determined to quarrel with his daughter-in-law, "you can hardly get the English view of family jewels, as they are unknown in America."

To this Theodora made no reply, and Lord Castlemaine felt himself a deeply injured man. Yet his words were not without their effect, and as Fermor entered the room at that moment, Theodora said to him pleasantly:

"Do you think it would be in better taste if I should wear the family jewels

to-morrow night at the ball?"

"I think perhaps it would be bet-

ter," replied Fermor.

"Then," said Theodora, "as it really makes no difference to me I will wear them. But I don't care in the least for them." Then she added, with a demure smile: "As Lord Castlemaine says, tiaras are not really suited to the insignificant American figure and features." And Theodora actually laughed as she spoke.

Fermor was as much struck with the novelty of Theodora's view as Lord Castlemaine himself was, but had

greater indulgence for it.

On Monday the great political meeting in the market town was held, and Fermor acquitted himself with remark-

able brilliancy.

That night there was a splendid ball at King's Lyndon. It was a very general affair, meant as the introduction of the Fermors once more as social and political factors in that division of Midlandshire.

The ball had a distinct political complexion, and embraced not only persons of the highest rank, but extended to many who had never before received an invitation to a great house. only certainty about a ball is the amount of the cost; its success appears to be governed by inscrutable forces. The King's Lyndon ball was from the beginning a splendid success; in addition to the magnificent suite of rooms, fine music, gorgeous supper, and large and distinguished attendance, dancing went with a swing, and the spirit of gayety prevailed. The host and hostess received with the utmost cordiality. Theodora had carefully studied the personnel of the ball, and managed to have something appropriate to say with her natural grace to every person pres-

An American woman in such a position was a novelty to nine-tenths of those present. They were all conscious of the difference in dress, looks, manner, accent, and power of the American and the English woman, but there was no doubt of Theodora's ability to She wore the Castlemaine tiara and necklace, and made Fermor laugh by saying resignedly:

"I don't look so badly in them, after

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The ball was not over until five o'clock in the morning. When the house was finally quiet the dawn was at hand.

After luncheon, on that day, the guests all left except Lord Castle-The prime minister, on making his farewell, said, with much sincerity, that he had enjoyed his visit. His secret comment was that it had been a little different from most visits, and he wondered how much Fermor's marriage would profit him personally and politically.

When the guests were all gone, Theodora went upstairs for a quiet hour with her father. Seymour was up and dressed, and in much the same state he had been for some days-perfectly quiet, and generally rational, but showing frequent lapses of memory. It was nearly four o'clock when Theodora went downstairs and out for a walk. Fermor was hard at work in his study, and Theodora was not sorry for an hour or two to herself after the excitement of the last few days.

She walked through the yew alley

to the ornamental water, and followed it around the lake. The spring sur. was on its descent, and already the shadows were growing long, and the birds that nested in the temple at the head of the lake were flying about the Theodora seated herself on a bench to enjoy the repose of the afternoon. In another moment she heard a firm step, and Lord Castlemaine's tall figure approached, and he seated him-self by her side. There could be no question that Lady Fermor and her father-in-law were at feud, although Theodora maintained her defensive attitude with smiling grace, and Lord Castlemaine could not forget he was at war with a charming woman. He knew very well that the strongest weapon that Theodora had was the fact that it was through Seymour's money King's Lyndon had been acquired and restored, and this weapon was one she could not use.

"I am glad that you are alone," said Lord Castlemaine, in his blandest manner, "as I think the time has come for plain speaking. The presence of your father at luncheon day before yesterday was nothing more or less than a catastrophe. You can't ask people to meet and sit at the same table with a man who has done time in prison. That is the simple truth, and you must know You must keep your father at a safe distance and avoid having anything to do with him outwardly, or you will ruin Fermor."

Lord Castlemaine expected Theodora to show anger at his words. He was hardly prepared, however, for the hot indignation which blazed from her

"How dare you!" she cried, rising to her feet, and then stopped short. Lord Castlemaine rose, too. He had at last made her throw away her buckler of calmness. She was trembling with excitement, and Lord Castlemaine followed up his advantage.

'The local newspaper on Saturday had an article which plainly pointed to Seymour as an escaped convict. But there is something else. You may have children. Normally, I would wish for an heir to this place." Lord Castlemaine waved his hand around at the verdant gardens, the rich park, the splendid mansion lying still in the afternoon glow. "But the heir to all this will have a taint in his blood. If your Fontarini child had lived he might have proved another Pietro Fontarini. It is likely that a child with the characteristics of your father will inherit this place. For my part, I am not unduly particular, but the thought of your children and the blood they will inherit is not very pleasant to me."

As Lord Castlemaine stopped speaking, he thought Theodora was about to faint, so quickly did she grow pale, and she sank, rather than sat, upon the bench. The words seemed etched in fire upon her brain. She had known the agony of looking into the innocent eyes of a child, and wondering if the soul of a felon would develop in that child. Lord Castlemaine, having done the mischief, felt a kind of pity for her as she sat, pale and trembling and wild-eyed. But this was not a question to be settled by an impulse of pity. He cared little for Fermor's political future, but he hated getting into the newspapers, and he had a real and intense family pride, which made all he said to Theodora on the subject of the future heir of King's Lyndon have the force of sincerity.

"Now," he said, sitting down by her, "you think me your enemy, but I am not. I know that you are in love with Fermor, and Fermor is in love with you: but what is called love is, in my opinion, merely a phase. It sounds well enough in poetry, and sometimes has an historic aspect in history. But it means nothing. I never allowed any woman to get a hold on me. Fermor allowed a painted Jezebel, the Bellenden woman, to get a very strong hold on his purse, but I don't think she ever had any on his heart. You women never believe these things. You will always cling to that superstition of love. You are going mighty near ruining Fermor with your quixotism about your father, and all that."

It was some minutes before Theo-

dora spoke. Then she said, in a low voice:

"I thought, after Pietro Fontarini died, that I should never again have any man insult me. You have insulted me grossly."

"And you will damage Fermor still more by ordering me off the premises," replied Lord Castlemaine, with cheerful good humor.

"I certainly shall," replied Theodora, "unless you make me an apology and agree not to repeat the offense."

Lord Castlemaine looked at her, his wide, handsome mouth coming open in a broad grin. His eyes were still fine, in spite of their leer, his figure still imposing, in spite of hard living, hard drinking, and hard working.

"I dare say I have offended a huge lot of people in the course of a long and ill-spent life," lie said, "and apologies have often been demanded of me, but no one ever secured one out of me yet. However, in this case, considering you are my daughter-in-law, and remarkably attractive and very determined, and I never know what you are going to do next, in your highly original and American way of managing things, I will apologize. There! I ask your pardon, and agree not to mention the subject again, because I know you will not forget it."

Lord Castlemaine walked away, half laughing, leaving Theodora still sitting on the bench. Despair seized her. Was she destined to bring misfortune on all whom she loved, and, even if children were given her, were they to carry the taint with them? She earnestly longed and hoped and prayed for children, but she recalled now that strange and secret feeling, which made itself felt in the agony of her grief for her child, that at least there could be no repetition of Pietro Fontarini. But from the storm of emotion one thought arose serene: She could never abandon her father.

Faithfulness and devotion were not only a part of her nature; they were her nature. While these thoughts were passing through her mind, she heard Fermor calling her name.

"Here I am," answered Theodora, rising, and going toward him. They came together in the very spot where they had first met as betrothed six months before. Theodora's pallor and agitation were plain to Fermor, and he took her hand, saying:

"What has happened?"

Theodora's other hand closed over

Fermor's.

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"I wonder," she said, "if, after all, I have done you terrible injury by marrying you, and will continue to do so as long as I live? I would rather die than do you an injury. But when I am asked to give up my fathercan't you understand that I can't give up the best father that any child has ever had, the kindest heart, the most generous man?" She stopped, and began to weep silently.

"I have not asked you to give him up, Theodora," replied Fermor. "It is not in you to do it; that I know, very well. I will help you to bear this. It would be idle to deny that the story will injure us both, but we have both profited by your father's generosity; so we must stand by him.

Theodora's tearful face was uplifted,

with a sad smile, to Fermor's.

"At last," she said, "I have found in you a man who knows the meaning of honor."

CHAPTER XXI.

The spring passed, and the summer was at hand.

The Fermors went up to London for a short season, and opened Seymour's magnificent house in Queen's Gate. A man in the beginning of his parliamentary service usually remained in the background, but a circumstance connected with his own division advanced Fermor with more than usual rapidity. He possessed all of Lord Castlemaine's powers as a debater, with a degree of prudence and tact entirely at variance with Lord Castlemaine's recklessness and inconsistency. Fermor, who, in his own interest, spoke once during the session, made an extraordinary impres-

The speech was meant to be a brief

one, but it became a running debate, in which Fermor was allowed to win his spurs against half a dozen clever opponents, and it lasted much longer than When he took his was anticipated. seat, members crowded around him, congratulating him, and Fermor felt that glow which attends a man on his first success in the arena for which he has longed since his boyhood.

When he went out of the House he found Theodora waiting for him, in It was about six an open carriage. o'clock on a lovely June evening, and the pinnacles of the great pile of the Houses of Parliament were reflected in the river, which ran, wine-colored, in the old Homeric phrase, under the glowing sun. It happened to be the anniversary of the meeting of Theodora and Fermor at the prime minister's reception, and Theodora, after congratulating Fermor warmly and tenderly on his parliamentary triumph, spoke of the

A year ago, they were each at the entrance of an unknown paradise. Theodora's heart, she thought, was in the grave of her dead child. She had looked so long in the faces of shame and sorrow that she thought she would never again recognize honor and peace. Now, how great the magic change! Love, honor, happiness, peace of soul were hers. There were disturbing elements in her life, such as the catastrophe of her father; but a woman secure in the fortress of honor, and guarded by love, need not be afraid. So with Fermor-how kindly had Fate smiled upon him! That June day a year ago he had, it is true, made up his mind to cast off the shackles of sloth and the influence of an evil woman. it was as if the first look into Theodora's spiritual face had waked him to real life.

The Fermors' season in London was short, but brilliant. Theodora's mind was easier than she had imagined it possible concerning her father. He was well, and, apparently, perfectly happy at Barley Wood, under Reyburn's watchful and intelligent care. Seymour's mind was by no means free from lapses, but these lapses were unimportant, and seemed to be growing less. The thing which Theodora lreaded most did not occur—Seymour did not develop the design, at which he had several times hinted, of returning to America and serving out the remaining three months of his sentence. Wyndham, on his return to America, sounded the authorities, and, informing them of Seymour's blameless life and decaying intellect, received assurances that no effort would be made to disturb him in his old age. This gave great peace to Theodora and to Fermor.

As a reward for Fermor's kindness and complaisance, Theodora chose to consider that Lord Castlemaine had made her an ample apology, and treated him with perfect courtesy. Lord Castlemaine himself never could find it in his heart to be steadily angry with a charming woman, and assumed an attitude of indulgence toward his daughter-in-law. Theodora readily, and with dignity, took her place among the great political hostesses, and her social career was marked by the same graceful individuality which marked everything she did. It looked as if it might be possible that, after all, Theodora would be a help, instead of a hindrance, to her husband, in his public career.

In July the Fermors returned to King's Lyndon. Once established there, the document of the doc

CHAPTER XXII.

At King's Lyndon, that autumn, there were no splendid parties, as Theodora's health required complete repose. In all her after life, if she had been asked to name the happiest period, it would have been that quiet autumn and early winter. She had the mysterious hope and joy of coming motherhood. The life of repose and

quiet companionship with Fermor she liked above all things.

The only cloud in her sky was her father's condition. But at least he had lived to see her happiness, and it was better that he should fade gently out of life as he was than that he should live to suffer. If only he could last until she could lay her child in his arms, Theodora asked no more.

And this was granted her. In January her child was born; a beautiful boy, without a blemish from head to Fermor had the Englishman's foot. deep and intense satisfaction in the birth of an heir, and even Lord Castlemaine condescended to be pleased. Seymour's delight was pathetic, and when, in the early March days, Theodora could come to him once more, bringing with her the beautiful man-child, he seemed to have reached that point of peace and happiness which to the old points the way to the Door of the Other House.

In the early spring, Seymour took to his invalid's chair, and only left his bedroom for a sheltered place on the porch when the sun shone at midday.

One afternoon in April, Fermor accompanied Theodora upon her daily visit to Barley Wood; with them was the child, in the hands of his nurse. It was Reyburn's only grievance in life that it was not hers to attend the child wholly. But she felt that Seymour would not much longer require her faithful ministrations, and then she would once more return to King's Lyndon.

The day was beautiful and bright, and Seymour seemed suddenly to have had the wine of life poured into his shattered frame. His voice was strong, his eye clear, and, what was most amazing, his memory seemed to have recovered its full force.

As they sat on the sunny porch, after Reyburn had fondled the boy, and the child had been taken away, he turned suddenly to Fermor, and said:

"When I am gone I desire you to take possession of a certain writing desk, of which I have given the key to Reyburn, and in it you will find a letter, addressed to Theodora, which you must give her. I desire you to take charge of it, because I know that at that time my daughter's grief will be such that she may not be able to attend to this as promptly as I wish."

Fermor gave his promise, and Theodora, smiling, and taking her father's

hand, said:

"I think, dear papa, if you improve like this it will be many long years before that letter reaches me."

Seymour looked at her, with the peculiar and appealing expression of the eye which had always been his char-

acteristic.

"I think I shall go soon," he said, "and, remember this, that, beyond leaving you and the boy and the kind friends like Lord Fermor, I have not the least objection to taking the long journey. I feel as if the carriage were at the door, and I should not keep it waiting."

During their whole visit, not the slightest lapse of memory occurred on Seymour's part. He talked pleasantly with Fermor, fondled the boy tenderly; but his last words, his last kiss,

were for Theodora.

After she had gone down the steps, and was waving her hand to him at the bottom, he suddenly rose from his invalid chair, which he had not left for many weeks, and walked feebly to the steps, and held out his arms once more. Theodora ran and led him back to his chair, and made him promise her that he would not attempt to leave it again without some one to assist him. Then, with an abundant tenderness, she said good-by to him. Seymour's sudden improvement seemed to be the one overflowing joy in Theodora's life. He was not nearly so old as he looked, being only a little over sixty, and there seemed no reason why there should not be many years of life and health before him.

That night at midnight a summons came for Theodora and Fermor—Sey-

mour was dying.

It was but a short drive through the shadowy darkness of the park and along the white highroad to the small house at Barley Wood. Doctor Rolfe met Theodora and Fermor at the door.

"You can go in," he said. "His mind is perfectly clear, but he will hardly last until the morning."

Fermor's arm helped Theodora up the stairs. The shock of pain in the midst of her halcyon days had unnerved her. They found Seymour propped up in bed, his eye and mind as clear as ever in his life, but with the unmistakable look of the man who knows himself to be standing on the brink of the farther world.

Theodora had meant to be calm, but all at once her courage forsook her; she laid her head on her father's pillow, put her arms about him, and burst into a passion of tears. Seymour smiled faintly. Neither the love of husband nor of child had made the least alteration in Theodora's devotion

to him.

"You must be calm," he said feebly, "if you love me, because I have something to tell you. Something for only you and Lord Fermor to hear."

Reyburn, with instinctive delicacy, quietly left the room, and closed the door. When she was gone, Seymour said, in a voice weak and often faltering, but perfectly intelligible:

"It is something that a stronger man would have told you long ago, but I am not a strong man—I never was. I was too afraid of losing even the least bit of your affection."

He stopped, as if gathering strength to continue, and Theodora, like a true

daughter, said:

"Dear, dear papa, wait until morning to tell me what you wish me to know."

"I shall not be here in the morning," replied Seymour calmly. Whether he were a strong man or not, he faced death as coolly as any hero might.

Then he continued:

"Theodora, you think, perhaps because you have a child, that no one can love a child so well as its father and mother. That is not true. No father ever loved a child more dearly than I love you, and yet—and yet—it is not a blood tie between us."

Theodora drew back, startled into calmness. Neither she nor Fermor, standing beside her, doubted that Seymour was perfectly himself; his eye, that unmistakable witness, had a clearness of intelligence that confirmed his

words. He continued feebly:

"I have not the strength to tell you all—you will find it in the letter in my desk, and all the proofs are with it. Your father is the man I killed by the only blow I ever struck a man in my life. I found out that he had a child—you, my Theodora. He was estranged from his family, not from any serious fault of his own, and my blow had left his child a friendless and helpless orphan. I swore to devote my life to that child, and in this hour I can call God to witness that I have done it. I have done it."

Seymour's eyes were fixed on Theodora's face—it was as if he asked God's justice and mercy for himself as he spoke. Theodora, who had withdrawn a little from him, took his hand

and kissed it.

"All I can ever know is that you have been the best, the kindest, the tenderest father," she said softly, "and if I am not the child of your blood so much the greater your goodness to me."

She wrapped her arms about Seymour's thin form, with a gesture familiar to him from her childhood, and

whispered in his ear:

"Papa, papa—dear papa!"
Seymour's dying face was illuminated. He held out his hand to Fermor, who took it, and leaned over to hear Seymour's voice, which was grow-

ing weaker.

"You will find out all about it in the letter in the desk," he said. "After all, she is the child of my soul, if not the child of my blood. May your child be to you what she has been—"

He stopped, and his eyes suddenly lost their look of intelligence and concentration. His mind, nerved for the last effort, finally lost its way, and wandered amid the deeps and shallows that lead into the unknown and uncharted seas. After a moment or two

of distress he suddenly said to Theodora, in a strong and pleasant voice:

"I will not say good night, my dear, as I want to see you dressed in your white gown for the ball, before I sleep. I always sleep better for seeing you the last thing."

And the soul of Seymour, all weakness and all strength, all human and pitiful and loving, passed to its account before that merciful God, to whom he had ever offered the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart.

When Theodora and Fermor reached King's Lyndon, and stood alone together on the terrace, it was that mysterious hour which is neither night nor day, neither darkness nor light. A melancholy moon hung low in a haggard sky, and the stars had flickered out, and the dark earth, plunging through space, breathlessly awaited the miracle of the light.

"Let us not go in yet," said Theo-

dora

She looked so wan and weak that Fermor was alarmed for her, and he

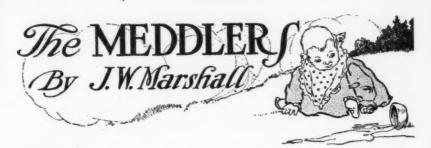
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"No," she said, "you are enough for me now. It is the first of all my sorrows in which I have had an arm to lean upon. My dear, dear father was ever more crushed than I by my griefs. Something tells me here"—she placed her hand on her heart—"that my father still exists, and still loves me, and that I shall see him again. If it is instinct, so much the better—instinct makes no mistakes. And with that to comfort me, and with you—"

She turned a glorified face on Fermor; her color returned, her eyes resumed all their softness and brightness; hers was no bewildered soul, but one which saw the beacon light of love,

both human and divine.

At that moment, the sky was suddenly flooded with opaline light. The wind of dawning reached from the spaces of the sun and brought with it a golden glory, a crimson splendor that enveloped the earth.





HE whole trouble gets started when Jimmie Gates comes a-walk-in' over to the corral one afternoon, all swelled up like a poisoned pup, and he says, says he—like it's

a credit to us all, and the State of Idaho generally: "Fellers," says he,

"it's a boy."

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Of course, we don't go flyin' in the face of Providence by pawin' round for trouble over the event, as such, you Nor 'tain't because the understand. boss has a Chink up from Ogden fixin' up our foodstuffs for a couple weeks, and we all gets nervous indigestion account of it. No, babies is usual with married folks, and ordinarily we simply loafs a little farther away from the house till things gets settled down some. And, as for indigestion, it sets a feller thinkin' about how he's been carryin' on lately, and so does good. The whole trouble is they starts to bring this baby up scientific.

You see, this is the second baby. Ain't it funny how the first one always is raised natural, gets his grud and his rockin' and singin to, et cetera, et cetera, when he calls for 'em; and then along comes number two, and the scheme's all changed. Number two gets played straight across the board accordin' to Hoyle, shuffle, cut, and deal, all in regular order. If he plays grub when sleepin' is trumps he finds he don't get the lead back. If grub is trumps, and he tries to sneak a sleep through, bang! down comes trumps, and he don't take the trick.

In the first place, you see, Sidney's a male child, and, as everybody knows, males is mighty thoughtful of themselves, from babies down to colts and calves, and back to babies, and then on up. So, naturally, he protests vigorous and free against any such game, pervadin' space to that extent I'm doggoned if it don't seem like night when he does stop long enough to drink one of them three-hour bottles they vouchsafes him. I declare for it, on cloudy days I've seen them chickens quit feedin' and make for the henhouse durin' them twenty-minute stops, it's that quiet, and solemn, and nighty feelin' by

But it don't look to us fellers like

Sidney's goin' to be any scientific baby.

In the second place, Jimmie Gates, bein' Mrs. Gates' husband, is this baby's father. That may seem like it's nothin' unusual, but if you knows Jimmie, you realizes how such a stubborn man is bound to have stubborn offspring.

"I says to Mrs. Gates," says Jimmie, when we tackles him about it one day out by the corral; "I says to Mrs. Gates, says I: 'You can just tell that trained nurse I ain't a-goin' to have Sidney brought up scientific, and that's final," says I. But, doggone it, she won't tell her."

"Huh!" snorts Lem Rogers. "I'd

make 'em!"

"Make who, what?" demands Jimmie, belligerent to once.

"I'd make Mrs. Gates and Miss Murray bring Sidney up natural," says Lem, "that's who what!"

"Oh! You would, would you?" says Jimmie, bristlin'. "Well, you let me tell you somethin', Lem Rogers, it's none of your business! And what's more," he says, "I ain't a-goin' to have him brought up scientific nor no other way, so far's you're concerned! And you fellers can just put that in your pipes and smoke it!" says he, and walks off stiff as a spavined horse. Talk about contrariness! But Lem's enough for him, all right.

for him, all right.

"Is that so?" he says, after Jimmie's out of hearin'. "Well, you let me tell you somethin', Jimmie Gates; if you figgers us fellers is goin' to be robbed of sleep, let alone havin' our feelin's wrung constant, account you ain't got the sand to stand up for that innocent child, you'll find somebody else has,"

says he, vigorous.

"What you goin' to do, Lem?" asks Jim Slater, rollin' up a cigarette.

"What am I goin' to do?" he asks, scornful. "What are we goin' to do? Sit here idle, and see that lovely child made a fool of? 'Tain't right! Supposin' he grows up to be one of them scientific professors we sees out here sometimes, tappin' away at rocks and things with them little hammers? Then how'd we feel? Fellers," he says, feel-in', "'tain't right. Bein' scientific with kids is just an excuse for lettin' 'em cry while you reads in a book or fixes yourself up pretty, like that nurse does. Why," he goes on, "you don't see calves and colts gettin' their grub, et cetera, et cetera, accordin' to a card tacked up on the wall, does you? Excuse me! 'Tain't natural! And the question is: Are we goin' to let Sidney be ruined by a lot of trained nurses and Mrs. Gateses, or are we goin' to not? our business!"

Well, it couldn't be put stronger'n that, an' we talks it over a while.

"I don't see nary a gleam, nowheres," says Jim Slater, final. "It's a case where bein' sure you're right and then goin' ahead don't count; we can't make a move. If they won't take our advice, why, they goes rushin' headlong to their ruin; and our consciences is clear. But it's mighty tough on old Sidney. He might better've been born without any parents'n what he's got."

But Lem ain't easy downed. "We only points out the right to Jimmie, so far," says he, "and Jimmie don't count, bein' one of these fellers 'at just as soon's he's sure he's right suspicions he's wrong. He's out on the north range now, and Mrs. Gates ain't sittin' up yet, so suppose we hops over and holds a powwow with Miss Murray?"

Well, we figgers on that a while, and decides, by golly, we'll do it. "We'll flatter 'er up a little, first off," says Lem, as we walks over. "She'll appreciate that, and it'll give 'er confidence in what we tells 'er later on. Women is just like men thataway."

So we steps up to the door confident as a lot of Christians in a camp meetin', and Lem knocks. Miss Murray opens the door, and, great goodness alive! The wails 'at comes out of that room is heart rendering. Lem opens and shuts his mouth like he's sayin' somethin', but you can't hear a word. So Miss Murray steps out on the stoop and shuts the door.

"The baby's cryin' so I don't hear

you," she says to Lem.

"Why, I just says, 'how're you, Miss Murray,' " says Lem. "We was over this way, anyway, and thought we'd stop in and see how you'n Sidney gets along. Seems a trifle wakeful this mornin'," he says, easylike.

"A little," says she, crinklin' up her eyes. "I'm afraid too much so for you-all to see 'im this afternoon. I'm sorry; can't you come over again some other time?" she says, pleasant, half

turnin' to go back in.

"Wait a minute," says Lem, hasty. "We really comes to see you, anyway. You're a-lookin' mighty well this afternoon, Miss Murray," he says, smilin'.

"Ain't she, though?" says Jim, enthusiastic-like. "I declare for it, Miss Murray, you reminds me of two-year-old colts this afternoon. You does, for

a fact."

"Thank you," says Miss Murray, after lookin' us over a minute. "I'm feelin' very well, indeed." And she stands there, sober, like she's waitin' for Lem to tell 'er what we wants. Her

tones ain't so cross, but sort of cold and vaguelike; and I sees there ain't no chord been touched yet; so I has a try, myself, throwin' a trifle wider loop.

"I'll bet you makes the daisy bread, Miss Murray," I busts out to 'er, admirin'. "I'll bet it'd melt in your

mouth!"

But touch 'er? Great goodness alive! Trained nurses is trained too fine for me. She crinkles up her eyes for just a minute, like she's goin' to smile, but she don't; the crinkles all smooth out, and there ain't no more expression to 'er face than there is to a bucket of milk, as she opens them lips of hers, and she says, says she-what you reckon she says?

"You flatter me!" she says, icy. That's what she says. "You flatter me!" Ketches on right away, and I'm that embarrassed I turns red as a beet, and Lem's mashin' my foot with his, and she looks down and sees it, and then at Lem, and he turns red as a beet, and then she smiles, bitter, and looks

at Jim, and he turns red, too. It's sure a tryin' minute, I assures you; us standin' there burnin' up, and. she, big-eyed and cool, smilin' bitter, lookin' us over like we're a five-cent bunch of radishes. Then directly she smiles, a sure-enough smile, this time, till her cheeks is all full of little dents, and her eyes sparkles like rained-on

"Well?" says she, questionin'.

"Miss Murray," busts out Lem, "we ain't satisfied the way you'n Mrs. Gates is raisin' Sidney!"

Well, sir, she opens her eyes pretty wide at that, and don't say nothin' back, so Lem's encouraged some, and tells her what we thinks and why we thinks "The natural way don't leave nothin' to be desired," he winds up, convincin'; "we're range-bred, ourselves."

"How int'ristin'," says she, and drops a little curtsy to each of us with a mockin' smile. "Range-bred! Rangebred!" she repeats, thoughtful, lookin' us over again. "Now I wonder what could've been the matter?" she says, like it's to herself, puzzled-like.

"The matter with what, ma'am?"

speaks up Lem, solicitous, like he's almighty glad to help her out if he can. "With the range!" she chuckles. And

before we says a word she opens the door, throws us another mockin' smile over 'er shoulder, and is gone.

Say, you want to know how we gets offen that stoop? We backs off and halfway toward the corral before we comes to. Then Lem lets out a snort. "Huh!" says he, disdainful. "She thinks she's smart!"

"And pretty!" says Jim.
"And funny!" says I; and Lem turns on me, ugly.

"Yes," says he, "and if you'd of kept your mouth shut, I'd 'a' had Sidney's mouth stopped with a extra bottle by this time, sure."

I'm pretty mad at that, I reckon; but before I gets a chance to say what I'm agoin' to say back to 'im-I forgets now what it was, but you can bet 'twas somethin' daisy-Jim cuts in and goes

to smoothin' things out.

"It's just a case of euchre all around, so far's I can see," says he. "She caught on and didn't give us no chance; and you fellers goin' up in the air as to who's led the wrong card ain't helpin' Sidney out none. You all ain't goin' to let a woman beat you out on that game clear through, are

you?" he says. "Not by all the nurses in general use!" snorts Lem, determined. And then he says he's sorry he said what he said, and I says I'm sorry I says what I'm agoin' to say back, and we all rolls a cigarette and sits down by the colt sheds to talk it over. We talks and we talks, but we can't think of no way out, unless we tackles Miss Murray again, and as that seems a waste of time, we're up against it. reckon we'd have give up, maybe, if Sidney hadn't took a fresh holt just then and yelled harder'n ever. So we allows we'll do the chores and then sleep on it till mornin'.

But we don't; we don't have to. Along about eight o'clock the boss comes over to the bunkhouse sort of

worried.

"Boys," says he, "Sim Garrett's just

come a-ridin' down from Soda with a telegram for Miss Murray, sayin' her father's took bad, and she's got to go home. Jimmie's goin' to start down with her early in the mornin', and that means some one's got to look after the baby a while till Mrs. Gates gets up. I'm sorry there ain't no woman handy, says he, "but there ain't, and so one of you boys'll have to help out. Whoever does it'd better go over to-night," he says, "and have Miss Murray show him what's wanted." And with that he

turns and walks out again.

"Well, sir, we sits there a minute a-gawpin' at the door, and then Jim looks at me, and I looks at Jim, and then, simultaneous, we both turns and looks at Lem, hard. "It's Providence does it, Lem," says Jim, coaxin'-like, after what seems a long time. But Lem don't say a word; he's sort of all shrunk down into himself, and he sits there with his eyes on the floor, breathin' hard and studyin'. Then in a min-ute he shakes himself like a wet dog, and without a word gets up and reaches for his hat. At the door he turns and looks at us, injured.

"You fellers needn't have looked at me thataway, anyway," says he. "I'd have offered to go in a minute if you'd give me time." And with that he's

Well, we sits there a while without sayin' anything more, and then Jim says, like we've played it low on Lem and he's excusin' us for it: "It is Providence does it, and besides that, Lem's been engaged once; it's more fitten he should go." And with that he looks at me and I looks at him, and then we both draws a long breath and starts rollin' cigarettes. But I'll tell you one thing, I wouldn't have tackled that job, not for no money, Sidney or no Sid-

Well, we waits and we waits, but Lem don't come back; and then we waits some more, and still he don't come. And finally we allows maybe he stays all night, and we goes to bed. Maybe it's twelve o'clock I wakes up: maybe it's one, I dunno. Anyway, somethin' wakes me up along in there some time, and I sees the light's lit, and then I raises up in the bunk on one elbow, and Lem's back. He's a-sittin' there by the fire with his chin in his hands and his face all drawed up, studyin'. And before I gets a chance to ask him how things has gone, he takes out his handkerchief, absent-like, spreads 'er out over one knee, folds er over cornerwise, lays his hand in the middle, and doubles the three corners over on his hand like the first part of the way you makes a mouse with it when you're a kid in school.

"'Tain't right!" he says to himself, after studyin' it a minute; and he straightens it out and begins all over again. "'Tain't right!" he says again, discouraged. And he keeps on foldin' it over, and shakin' his head, and sayin', "'Tain't right," till I can't stand

it no longer.

"What you doin', Lem?" I asks 'im, lowlike.

"Practicin'," he says, absent, like he

only half hears me.
"Practicin' what?" says Jim, who's woke up and is lookin' out of his bunk. "What you practicin', Lem?" says Jim again, louder, when he don't an-

Well, sir, Lem looks up so quick I hears his neck snap, distinct, and his

face gets awful red.

"None of your darned business!" he snaps out, and gettin' up hurried begins undressin'. Say, his face is red.

"If one of you fellers had all I got to do to-morrow, I reckon I'd have sense enough to shut up and let a feller get some rest," says he, shortlike. And at that he blows out the light and hops into his bunk and won't say another

But he's all right next mornin', and is eager to start takin' care of Sidney,

certain.

"I makes him forget there's such a thing as a scientific rule in all the world inside of two hours," says he, when he starts over; and he sure does, for after hookin' up for Jimmie and seein' him and Miss Murray off, we strolls over, and by golly, old Sidney ain't cryin' a mite. Lem's a-sittin' in a rocker with

him in his arms a-pullin' away at a extra bottle already, and a-croonin' away to him to beat all. Sure he is; he's a-singin' "The Cowboy's Lament," and Sidney pulls a while at the bottle, and then listens, pulls a while and listens; and, say, it's just the peacefullest thing you ever sees.

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"Beat the drum lowly, and play the fife slowly;
Play the Dead March as they carry me out,"

croons Lem, and that little rooster just lays back and takes his grub and listens, and wins from the first jump.

"It's a great objeck lesson," whispers Jim, as we tiptoes out, "and I only wishes them women could see it. If there's ever a natural-born mother in this world, she's Lem."

Well, we does up the chores and then strolls on back, and old Sidney's alayin' in his crib sleepin' peaceful, and Lem's got a apern on, and is trippin' around that room straightenin' things up till it does your heart good to see it.

"I gives him his grub and rocks him to sleep, and there he is," says Lem. "And when he wakes up he gets his grub and is rocked to sleep again, and no attention whatever paid to that there card on the wall," he says, point-in' to it with his thumb, disdainful. "Trained nurses is overtrained." And with that he goes bustlin' round again, hummin' a little tune. We sits there admirin' him a while, and in about a hour Sidney wakes up, and Jim wants to feed him.

"You!" says Lem, archin' up his eyebrows some. "Well," he says, dubious, after a minute, "'tain't just professional"—and he smiles sort of supercilious—"but I'll fix the grub and show you how to hold him, and so I reckon no harm's done." Gettin' a little doggy over it, you see, but he heats up the bottle and tells Jim to hold him as he done, and in a minute there's the prettiest table-doty goin' forward you ever listens to. Then, while Sidney's gettin' his grub, the boss comes in.

gettin' his grub, the boss comes in.
"Hello," he says, "everything O.
K.?"

"Sure," says Lem. "Mrs. Gates eats

all the breakfast the Chink fetches over and is feelin' fine. Sidney, there, you sees for yourself."

"Need any more help?" the boss asks after a minute, noddin' toward Jim and

"No, sir," says Lem. "We gets along nicely, thank you. I'll tell you, though, Mr. Gordon," he goes on, thoughtful, "if you somehow manages to get a woman down from Soda for a few days to run errands et cetera, I appreciates it."

"Um!" says the boss. "That's a reasonable request enough, I'm sure. We'll see what can be done. Ain't nothin' else you thinks of, is there, Lem?"

"Well," says Lem, hesitatin'-like, "you might get some flat bottles 'stead of these here round ones. I never does like round bottles for babies, nohow; they rolls off too easy. And if 'tain't too much trouble," he goes on, "you might send Pinto there over to Oxford for one of them wooden racks to dry things on; lines is too untidy. And whilst he's there he might's well get a new curtain for the winder to keep the sun out of Sidney's eyes, and one of these here screens for the fire. And Mr. Gordon," he says, excusy-like, "would you mind not smokin' in here account of Sidney's lungs?"

"Not at all," says the boss, throwin' his cigarette out the door. "Lem,
I'm astonished at you not to think of
that before." And he looks round the
room at everything, pleased as can be.
"Now you're sure there ain't nothin'
more you think you finds time to use?"
he asks, final.

And when Lem can't think of nothin' more, the boss allows he'll see what he can do about 'em all, and then goes on in the other room to see Mrs. Gates. And by golly, they gets to laughin' so hard in there that Lem knocks on the door and speaks to 'em about it. He does, for a fact.

"Dogged if I'm goin' to have a lot of noisy folks around keepin' my baby awake," he says to us, valiant. "Not on your life; if they never learns to keep still before, why, doggone 'em, let 'em practice up some now," says he, and he's sure firm in his looks.

"Speakin' of practicin', Lem," says Jim, after a while, "what was that you

was a-practicin' last night?"

Lem colors up a little at that. "Pshaw!" he says, flurried. "I wasn't really practicin', leastwise not to know how; I'm only workin' for speed. Here," says he, proudlike, "let me show you." And he takes Sidney away from Jim, lays him on his lap, and

what you reckon?

It's pants! Honest, that's what it is, it's pants! And I want to say right here that the way old Lemmie takes a square piece of cloth-yes, sir, just plain cloth-folds 'er over once, and whisks a pair of pants on that there baby don't leave nothin' to be desired. It's superb! Why, that cold old Jim Slater sits there with his mouth open for a whole minute, he's that effected.

"Lem Rogers!" says he at last, solemn. "Lem Rogers! Be you man, god, or devil? Such gifts as you displays in this here room to-day is past

belief in humans.

"Pooh!" says Lem, wavin' his hand. " 'Tain't so much; and I ain't layin' claim to bein' nothin' more'n a man, same as you and Pinto. I'm only a instrument brought forward to show how children is brought up proper. I does with my might what my hands finds to do, and that's all."

How he's that modest about all them things he does is what gets Jim and me, and we talks of nothin' but pants all day. We thinks of 'em constant.

"Pinto," says Jim, when we're washin' up for supper that night. "It's sure a safe bet that all that's knowed about babies up to and includin' the present time is understood by that there man." And it surely seems so. We just feels

"Three extra bottles over'n above what it says on the card to-day," says Lem, when we goes over, "and rocked to sleep regular. Good, solid cow's milk, too; no water, and none of that fancy milk-sugar stuff out of a can. You can bet your life if I errs at all it'll be on the right side, and there's more babies alive to-day leadin' useful lives, and less trouble in the world generally," he says, impressive, "if everybody takes that for their motto."

Well, of course, there's no answer to that, whichever way you looks at it: so we just loiters around a while till Lem gives Sidney another extra bottle, and after he's inhaled the last drop we shakes hands all round, and Lem says he reckons he gives the baby a bath, and Jim and I goes off to bed feelin' that Sidney's sure in safe hands at last, and we gets a night's sleep.

But 'tain't to be. Nothin' ever is, much, I notices. It does seem like whenever things gets to goin' right at last they're sure to go wrong; and this ain't no exception. We ain't over to the bunk house ten minutes before Lem comes a-runnin' in, his face white as

wool.

"My Gawd, boys!" he cries, cripplin' down on a bunk, "Sidney's dyin'!" His face goes down in his hands, and his whole frame is shook by sobs.

Well, sir, if you ever sees two fel-lers in all your life who resembles fresh-ketched fish, Jim and me's them people. Openin' and shuttin', openin' and shuttin', and never a sound comin' out, till directly Lem raises his dreadful eyes, all swimmin', and we sees words is futile, anyway. His grief is terrible, and we don't ask no questions, and we don't lose no time. Jim hustles on his ridin' clothes and I runs over and saddles up Lem's Billie horse, and 'tain't five minutes before Jim's a-burnin' the wind for Doc Bates up to Soda.

It'll be two hours before Jim's back with him, ridin' his best, and gentlemen, hush! Two such hours I knows I'm never goin' to spend again, never. We hurries over to the house, and when we gets to the door we dassen't go in, everything's that still. I tell you, one of them yells of Sidney's we kicks against a while back sounds mighty good to us just then. But we listens and listens, and they ain't a sound, and so after a while we opens the door and tiptoes in, fearful, and Sidney's a-lyin' over in his crib quiet as death itself.

I dassen't go over to look at him, and Lem dassen't; and Lem, he won't sit down, and he won't stand still, but goes to walkin' back and forth, from one end the room to the other, quietlike, so Mrs. Gates won't hear him; back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. It seems like hours goes by thataway, and then, all of a sudden, Sidney stirs.

Say, did you ever try to draw a long breath and have your heart beat it back so hard you can't get it past your Adam's apple? Well, that's what I done, then; and if Lem hadn't of gone tiptoein' over to the crib at that minute I'd of busted a valve somewheres, sure. Lem looks a while, and then

motions me over.

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But say, I'm doggoned if Sidney looks to me like he's dyin', and I says so. "Looks to me like he's asleep," I

"Pinto," whispers Lem, hoarse, "tell me if you ever hears of a seven-day-old baby gettin' well offen appendicitis? Honest, does you?" And I thinks he'll grip my arm off.

"How you know he's got appendicitis?" I says, and I'm sure scared at

that word.

"I seen it!" he whispers. "I seen it with my own eyes! I only wish I hadn't; I'll see it to my dyin' day, Pinto. And it's all along of givin' him all that milk. My Gawd!" he groans,

"I can see it now!"

And then he goes to walkin' back and forth again, back and forth, back and forth I tries to soothe him up some, but poor Lem's past help. He won't even listen, and so I sits down in a chair, final, and thinks about old Sidney. I reckon a hour goes by thataway, Lem a-walkin', and me a-thinkin', not sayin' a word, and then first we knows there's a racket outside, and Jim and Doc is there.

"Well," says Doc, brisk, pullin' at his coat, "what we got here?"

"Appendicitis!" whispers Lem, pointin' to the crib.

Doc stops with his coat halfway off, and looks at Lem sharp. "Who says so?" he demands, incredulous.

"I do," says Lem, stout. "I sees it. I starts givin' him a bath, and discovers it just in time."

Well, sir, Doc stands there with his coat half off, and his eyes bugged out at Lem like he thinks he's crazy.

"You sees it?" he repeats.

"Yes," says Lem, "I sees it."

I reckon Doc stands there a full minute, lookin' at him thataway, then he gives a snort, pulls off his coat with a jerk, tosses it onto a chair, and steps over to the crib. He turns down the blanket—Lem ain't put his clothes back on—and while he's lookin' at him Lem explains the case and how it's all his fault.

"Whole cow's milk whenever he cries, and rockin' him, too," repeats Doc, stern. And when Lem nods, dumb like, he just gives him a awful look

and turns back to Sidney.

"You got to operate, Doc?" whispers Lem, bendin over.

At that Doc begins to snicker, never takin' his eyes offen Sidney, a-lyin' there. And he won't answer a word, just keeps on a-snickerin' and snickerin'; and right in the middle of it in walks Jimmie and Miss Murray, who's come back account her father's a whole lot better when she gets there.

"What's the matter?" says Miss Murray, big-eyed, to Doc Bates.

"Appendicitis!" says Doc, grave.
"Oh, doctor!" she cries, puttin' her hand to her side like it pains her.

"Come and see for yourself," says Doc. "Mr. Rogers, there, diagnosed it. Plain as the nose on your face," he goes on, a-pointin', when she's run

Well, sir, she gives one look at Sidney, and then at Doc, and he's snickerin' away again to beat all. Then he whispers somethin' to Jimmie, who's run over, and, doggone, Jimmie he looks at us fellers and starts snickerin', too.

"What you all doin' to my baby, out there?" wails Mrs. Gates, from the other room. And Miss Murray gives us fellers a bitter look, grabs up Sidney in his blanket, and rushes in there with him, and Doc just lays back and

It's awful! And them women is laughin' and carryin' on in there fit to kill, too. Lem turns from white to red, and Jim and I stands there, all helpless like, until, in a minute, Lem gets kind of mad.

"Doc Bates!" he says, shortlike, "What is the matter with Sidney, any-

way?"

Appendicitis!" snorts Doc.

"No, 'tain't," says Lem, bristlin', "or you wouldn't be laughin. Gimme a straight answer, and no string to it."

Doc lays back for a minute and looks at Lem, half grave, half laughin'. "Lemuel," he says, final, "in one breath you asks me what 'tis, and forbids me tellin'. Now," he goes on, serious, "you boys and me is goin' to have a secret, only you won't know what 'tis, And so long as you preserves a strict neutrality in this baby's bringing up, I keeps it inviolate. If you don't,' says, shakin' his finger, "I tells every man on the range."

And then, before we gets to say another word, Miss Murray comes back, a-holdin' her sides, and what you reckon she done? She looks at us a minute like we're the most ridiculous folks in the world, and then she takes a-hold of 'er skirts on either side, spreads 'em out, so, and comes toward us thataway.

"Shoo!" she says, like she's chasin' chickens out the garden. "Shoo!" says she again, and I'm doggoned if she don't shoo us plumb out of that room and off the stoop. She does, for a

OCTOBER

DOWN the bleached hills the proud October came. Her scarlet cloak trailed 'round her as she trod. Before her swayed far fields of goldenrod, Behind her burned the sunset's lurid flame.

Soft was her step and yet the rushes heard, Whisp'ring more closely by the fountain-pool. The lilies slept and from the garden cool Rose the sweet sorrow of my mocking bird.

And lo! My red rose of the fragrant heart, That o'er her lattice sweetened all my June, Grew tremulous beneath so pale a moon And one by one her petals fell apart.

October came with gifts and garnered store Of ripened garden and of golden field. Orchard and hedge and pleach-ed vine-row yield Broad, creaking baskets heaped and running o'er.

Well may my neighbors think no scorn of me, So nobly hath mine Autumn done her part. Yet ah! My red rose of the fragrant heart, I would give all this fruitage back for thee! -MARGARET HOUSTON.





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I' is a popular fallacy that the beginners always win at bridge and poker. It is, of course, undeniable that wretched players often hold better cards than perfect

players, and that a lucky distribution of the hands will sometimes favor them, but to suppose that the odds are always in favor of the beginner would be the sheerest madness. If a beginner wins at bridge, we are so struck by the phenomenon that we fail to remember the hundred or so instances in our experience where the beginner has been soundly beaten.

We suppose that ninety per cent. of the bridge players in the world regard a trick in trumps as having a greater value than a trick in a plain suit. It is astonishing to see how carefully most players will play their They must lead them from trumps. the right side, at the right time, and they must be careful about leading a high card, perhaps, to coax a higher card from the adversary who is to play after them. Infinite pains over the trump suit, and, nine times out of ten, no pains whatever about the plain suits.

Another deep-rooted folly is the way in which average players fail to pay any attention to the fall of the cards on the first trick or two. Along about trick seven, they begin to think with a vengeance. One would suppose that they were intent upon some abstruse problem in fluxions or calculus, when, as a matter of fact, there could be no doubt whatever as to their next play, if only they had paid a little heed to the cards that were played to the first trick or two.

There are, roughly speaking, five kinds of bridge players. Let us classify them, as follows: (1) Idiots; (2) butchers; (3) tinkers; (4) artists; (5) necromancers.

In many hands two idiots, playing together, will make as many tricks as two necromancers can make. In one hand in every thousand they will make more, but in, say, ninety out of a hundred, they will make anywhere from one to seven less. These subtle differences between players are interesting; let us pursue them farther. For purposes of comparison we shall take a hand that can be played in a variety of ways. A hand something like it was arranged, years ago, by R. F. Foster, the well-known authority on card I have forgotten his exact games. hand, but the following resembles it, and will very well answer our purpose. Let me see any two players attack this hand and I shall very soon tell you to what class of players they belong. Let me urge my readers to deal out the hands, before reading the rest of this article, and ask two of their friends to carry out a sham battle with them, as it were. The cards are distributed as follows:

Z. Dealer: Ace, queen, jack, 9, 2 hearts; 8, 7 clubs; 9, 7 diamonds; 10, 9, 8, 5 spades.

A. Leader (to the left of the dealer): 10, 8, 3 hearts; 3 clubs; ace, king, 10, 8, 5 diamonds; queen, 7, 6, 4 spades.
Y. Dummy: King, 4 hearts; jack,

10, 9, 7 clubs; queen, jack, 6, 4, 2 dia-

monds; ace, 2 spades.

B. Third hand (to the right of dealer): 7, 6, 5 hearts; ace, king, queen, 6, 5, 4 clubs; 3 diamonds; king, jack,

3 spades.

The score is one game all, 24 all. Dealer declares hearts. How should the leader and his partner play their hands in a regular rubber, that is to say, without seeing any cards but dummy's?

Let us see how the hand would be played by each of our imaginary classes of players. To begin with the idiots, of whom there are about ten per cent.

among bridge players.

The leader, A., will lead his singleton 3 of clubs, for there is nothing so beautiful in all the world as a singleton, to an idiot, and third hand will take the trick with his ace, in order to deceive the dealer. He will then play the king of clubs, on which A. will discard the 4 of spades. B. now plays the queen of clubs, which Z. trumps with the jack of hearts. Z. takes three rounds of trumps and leads the 9 of diamonds, which A. takes with the ace of diamonds. After this, A., of course, leads the king of diamonds, and Y, and Z. naturally make the rest of the tricks, Y. getting in with the ace of spades and Z. discarding his losing spades on Y.'s two good diamonds and one good club. In other words, the idiots have lost three by cards.

The butchers, of whom there are about thirty per cent., will know a little too much to open a hand with a singleton when they hold an ace, king, suit, so that A. will open the hand with the king and ace of diamonds and then switch to his singleton club. B. will make the king and queen of clubs and then will begin to think. Why should he now play his ace of clubs and "set up" the jack in the dummy? After mature deliberation, he will lead a low club, which Z. ruffs with the jack of hearts, A., discarding his second spade, having already discarded one on the queen of clubs. Z. plays over to his king of hearts, takes out three rounds of trumps, goes back to the ace of spades, and plays the jack and queen of diamonds, on which Z. discards two losing spades. Z. now ruffs the jack of clubs and surrenders a spade trick. In other words, the butchers have done a little thinking and have been rewarded with one more trick than the idiots-Y. and Z. making

only two by cards,

Next come the two tinkers, of whom there are, among bridge players, about forty-five per cent. A. opens the king of diamonds. When he sees the three fall from his partner's hand he begins to think. B. cannot be playing "down and out"—in other words, echoing—as the two of diamonds is in the dummy. B. evidently has no more diamonds, and A., therefore, plays his lowest card in the suit, so as not to lose command of it. Y. plays the 4 and B. trumps. In like manner, B. will play the king of clubs, and, when he sees his partner's 3, will also pause to ruminate. He will then play a low club, so as not to risk losing command of the suit. A. will trump and return the 8 of diamonds. Y. will play the 6 and B. will trump, only to be overtrumped by Z. Z, will now play the ace of hearts, and follow it with a low heart, which he will take with the king in dummy, drawing all the trumps except two in Z.'s hand. Dummy will now play the queen of diamonds. Z. will discard a spade, and A. will take the trick with the ace of diamonds. Whatever A. now plays, the dummy can get in and, on the good jack of diamonds, Z. can discard a losing spade. Y. will also make the ace of spades and Z. will make his two trumps. Z. must, however, lose one trick in spades or clubs. In other words, the tinkers have thought a little harder than the butchers, and have only lost the odd trick, or one trick less than did the butchers.

Let us now see what two artists would do with the hand. We may add that there are only about fourteen and nine-tenths per cent. of these highly

favored beings in the world.

A, opens the king of diamonds. Directly he sees B.'s 3, he places the whole suit. Here he pauses and thinks, only, instead of half thinking, like the tinker, he gets right down to the job and thinks hard. After mature deliberation, he plays the 10 of diamonds, forcing Y. to cover with the jack and allowing B. to trump. B. now leads the queen of clubs, followed by a low club, which A. ruffs. A. now plays the 5 of diamonds. This is a very pretty play. The 8, at first sight, looks like the better play, but Y. might not cover with the queen, but choose, rather, to play the 4, in which case dummy would be left with the queen and 6, and the leader would be left with the ace and 5, so that dummy, in order to clean up a trick in diamonds, would only have to exhaust trumps with two leads of them-taking the second trick with the king-lead the 6 of diamonds and discard a spade in Z.'s hand. By doing this, the queen of diamonds would become good in dummy, and Z. could, later on, surely discard a spade on it. In other words, A. plans to keep a tenace over Y.'s diamonds, no matter how Y. plays.

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On A.'s 5 of diamonds, Y. plays the 4. B. trumps and Z. overtrumps. Y. and Z. may now wriggle and squirm as they please, they cannot possibly make another trick in clubs or diamonds. If they take out the trumps and try to do so, A. and B. must infallibly win the odd, or one trick more than was taken by the tinkers. Just here, however, it may be pointed out that if Z, is an expert, he will, at this point, suddenly change his tactics and play for a ruff in the spade suit with one of dummy's trumps. If he is clever enough to do this and leads at once two rounds of spades, he can still make the odd trick against the artists, so that it is apparently impossible for any two players, holding the hands of A. and B., to win the game and the rubber.

Let us see what two necromancers, of whom there are in the world exactly one-tenth of one per cent., would do with this particular distribution of cards

These necromancers would play the first four tricks just as the artists did.

At this point A. is in the lead, having ruffed a low club. He is now in a position to do a little thinking. Z. must have had five hearts or more, as, with less than five and so little strength in the side suits, he would not have gone hearts. If he has six hearts to the ace, he must, with the ace of spades, go game. With any seven hearts he must likewise go game. Neither is there any hope for A. if Z. has five hearts to the ace, and the king of spades. In fact, Z. looks like a certain winner if he has the king of spades. He has no more diamonds. He cannot very well have any more clubs, or B. would have gone on with the king of clubs, which, with the ace, is marked in his hand. A. can begin to count B.'s hand. He must have four more clubs and five other unknown cards, of which only two can probably be trumps. A.'s only chance of winning the game is to find his partner, B., with either the ace of trumps or the king of spades. If Z. has the spade honors the game is gone. If he hasn't them, he must be prevented from ruffing his low spades in dummy. Knowing that he and his partner control the Camonds and clubs, A. leads a trump, which is taken in the dealer's hand. The dealer can now see that the jig is up unless he can ruff a spade in Y.'s hand. He therefore leads a low spade over to the ace and goes on with the 2 of spades, at which point B. can do a little thinking on his own account. His partner is obviously anxious to have the trumps knocked together. If Z. has the queen and another spade, or the queen and two spades, the queen is bound to make, so B. rushes up with the king and leads his last trump, which dummy takes with the king. The trumps are now all out, except three in Z.'s hand. Z. can now trump one of Y.'s clubs or diamonds. Neither play will help him. Let us suppose that he trumps a club. He must now lead a spade—either the 9 or the 10-and again A. must stop and think. He can now count B.'s hand. He must have four clubs and a card that is almost certainly a spade,

though it might be a heart. If it is a heart A. is safe in passing the trick for him to ruff. If it is a spade it may be the jack. If it is the jack the game is won. If it is not the jack, the game is inevitably lost, so A. passes the When B. takes the trick with trick. the jack of spades, he has only to lead his ace of clubs, and Z. must, no matter how he plays, surrender a spade trick, the game, and the rubber.

This is the way that two necromancers dissect and analyze every hand that they pick up. The above is a hand in which two good players, simply by drawing careful inferences, must inevitably win the odd trick, and yet I venture to say that not one player in a hundred will play A.'s hand correctly, unless he has seen B.'s cards.

Here is a very pretty little problem by an anonymous author, who calls himself "Bedouin." Such of my readers as like seriously to puzzle over these subtleties will probably not need the explanation of the problem which I have appended at the end of this article. Hearts are trumps. Z. is to lead and, with Y. for a partner, is to win four out of the seven tricks. All the hands are exposed.

Z. (dealer and leader). Jack, 6, 4

clubs; jack, 9, 8, 3 spades. Y. (dummy). 9, 7 hearts; king, 9,

5 clubs; king, 6 diamonds. A. (to the left of Z.). Jack hearts;

ace, 10 clubs; queen, 7, 6, 5 spades.
B. (to the right of Z.). Queen, 8, 7 clubs; 10 hearts; jack, 8 diamonds;

10 spades.

The problem is an extremely difficult one, and well repays the closest

study.

There seems to be no end to the ways of discarding at bridge. Here is a new system, invented by Mr. W. G. Hamner, Jr., of Virginia. I can recommend it cordially to advanced players, but am afraid that it is a little too complicated for beginners.

Let an odd card call for a black suit -spade or club. Let an even card call for red suits-hearts or diamonds. Now use the alphabet rule, C. D. H. S.-that is, let a club call for a diamond, a diamond call for a heart, a heart call for a spade, a spade call for a club. Instead of the whole rule, you only want to use a part of it. Couple the first two suits together, club-diamond, then the last two, heart-spade. Clubdiamond calls for heart-spade-heartspade calls for club-diamond.

Now, since an odd card calls for black suit, suppose we discard one, say, 3 of diamonds; diamond discard calls for a heart-spade, but spade, being a black suit, you must want it, since you discard an odd card. Should you not have an odd diamond, you could discard an odd club; club discard calls for a spade as well as a diamond. Should you want a club, you must discard an odd card, either a heart or spade. For a heart you must discard an even club or diamond. For a diamond you must discard an even heart or spade.

The advantage of this discard is that you have two suits to throw from to show strength. It sounds complicated, but read it again, and it will come to

you and seem very simple.

Club-diamond calls for hearts-spades. Heart-spade calls for clubs-diamonds. Odd cards call for black suits. Even cards call for red suits.

Two, 4, 6, 8, 10 diamonds and 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 clubs all call for hearts.

Two, 4, 6, 8, 10 hearts and 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 spades all call for diamonds.

Three, 5, 7, 9 hearts and 3, 5, 7, 9 spades all call for clubs.

Three, 5, 7, 9 diamonds and 3, 5, 7, 9 clubs all call for spades.

I see that England has again been stirred by a bitter attack on bridgethis time by perhaps the best-known church paper in Great Britain. The attack is so vehement and exaggerated that it ought to be its own best answer, but the defenders of the game are rushing to the rescue like the valiant men that they are. The article declares that for a large proportion of bridge players, the game has long ago ceased to be a pastime, and has become a passion, that theft and forgery have been the direct result of it, that bridge, unlike whist, is a gambling game, that no footman or valet can keep his situation unless he plays cards for money, that people live for bridge, and "their souls very much, however, if the distinare wilting away under this monstrous obsession," and that only good bridge players are asked to certain houses.

"Badsworth," that polished writer on bridge, has printed a little rejoinder. Among other things, "Badsworth"

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Bridge players would heartily welcome the cooperation of the church-if they could get it-to rid bridge of its abuses, and to bring its harmless pleasure within the reach of all; but they will not be pointed at with the finger of scorn as gamblers, and have their innocent amusement denounced as a sin and a monstrous obsession, from the narrow standpoint of prejudice and ignorance, without examining the position and credentials of irresponsible slanderers, who may perhaps

mean well, but who certainly act unwisely.

So once more we must turn to our women who take an interest in local matters, who know something of the world in which they live, and who do not wrap themselves up in selfish isolation, to ask them to extend the gift of bridge, which has brought so much light and happiness into their own lives, to those around them, to whom they have given so much-convalescent homes, cottage pitals and nurses in their midst-almost everything, in fact, but indoor amusement. A lesson in bridge now and again, and a little interest taken in the village players, would lay a foundation of much healthy pleasure, and deal a death blow to the nothing-to-do hours which so often lead to drunkenness and crime.

I feel that this point is well taken, and I hasten to urge people who are interested in the matter to teach the game as quickly as possible to all inmates of sanitariums, hospitals, asylums, alcoholic cures, and in all reformatories and prisons where cards and card playing are allowed.

A curious point has arisen in France concerning scoring at bridge. It seems that a well-known card club in Paris is trying to change the value of a trick in no trumps. As originally played, a trick in a no trumper counted ten points, and four aces in one hand counted eighty. This is as it should be, each count ascending two points at a time, but somebody who had learned the game, and learned it imperfectly, taught it to a class of players who did not stop to think about the matter very seriously, and the mistake has spread all over the world. I doubt guished Frenchmen who compose the committee of the club in question will succeed in changing the rules, so as to count ten points for every trick in no trumps, instead of twelve, as at present universally counted.

Solution of the seven-card heart problem quoted in the body of this article. The underlined card wins the trick.

Trick I. Jack spades, queen spades,

7 hearts, 10 spades.

Trick 2. 9 hearts, 10 hearts, 3 spades, jack hearts.

Trick 3. Ace clubs, king, 7, 4. The ace is evidently A.'s best lead; if Y. then fails to throw the king, A. and B. will win four tricks. A.'s best lead is now a low spade.

Trick 4. 5 spades, 6 diamonds, 8 diamonds, 8 spades.

Trick 5. Jack clubs, 10, 5, queen. If Z. were to make a mistake here and lead his winning spade the problem could never be solved. This fact

should not be overlooked.

The only variation of importance arises from A.'s refusal to cover the jack of spades at trick one. It is essential, then, that Y. should discard a club. The problem would then run along as follows:

Trick I. Jack spades, 5 spades, 5

clubs, 10 spades.

Trick 2. 4 clubs, ace, 9, 7.

Trick 3. Queen spades, 7 hearts, 10 hearts, 3 spades. Trick 4. Jack diamonds, 6 clubs, 6

spades, king diamonds.

Trick 5. King clubs, 8, jack, 10. Then Y. leads his losing trump and Z. must make a spade. It looks as though Y. and Z. could win the four tricks by the lead of a small club at The way to block such a trick one. play would be for A. to put up the ace at once. If Y. then plays a small club, A. next leads out his trump; while, if Y. plays the king of clubs under the ace, A. next leads the 10 of clubs, won by B; and A. and B. make their trumps separately. '





N a frame of mind as unusual as it was unwelcome, Dick Bannister paced restlessly up and down his rooms. They were large, those rooms, and there were more

of them than generally would be considered necessary for a bachelor. But Dick had needed the space in order to find room for the furniture and pictures, collection of weapons and the like, which he had picked up in the more prosperous moments of his long years of wandering, and which had remained, stored here, there, and everywhere, until some months before, when he was enabled to realize his long desire for something resembling a home
—for "a place to come back to," as he expressed it. The rooms were handsome, quiet, and in the very best of taste, like Dick himself. They "looked like money," and so they should; there was money behind them—for the moment. Of late Dick had prospered in the course he had marked out for himself; practice had brought proficiency.

When, some fifteen years before, Dick had put himself without the pale of civilized society, it was with the utmost deliberation; but, nevertheless, through sheer mistaken pride and boyish resentment toward a world which, after petting him for the two decades or so of his life, suddenly and most unjustly had rent from him all that he valued. Even so, few would have acted as he did; but, then, fewer still would have had his birth, upbringing, and the traditions that went with them.

For convenience, or through habit, Dick's family called itself American, but its blood was mixed with that of half the European races, and its habitat was as cosmopolitan as its blood. He himself, for as long as he could remember, had been in the habit of speaking, and even thinking, with perfect ease the language of whatever country he happened for the time to be living in. The household gods of such a family must of necessity be few, save for those which its members cherish in their minds. The one of these principally worshiped by Dick's family was pride; a pride which even outstripped its wealth, which in no way contributed to it. Pride of birth, position, and all that pertains to them, pride of the ability to attain, though in most cases that ability had been used rarely, and then in comparatively insignificant ways; pride of courage and beauty and strength—all these they had in far too great a measure, justified though they might be by the facts. Still, not all the effects had been bad, for one of them was the high sense of personal honor, the abhorrence of anything mean or low, which replaced the religion which it notably lacked. In no one who bore the name had this been more marked than in Dick. And though that name was not Bannister, nor anything like it, this sense remained with him still, in a queer, distorted kind of way.

It could hardly be said that his education had been given him; he took it, almost as he would, in any part of the world where he and his father happened for the time to be domiciled. The finishing touch alone would have been made compulsory had it not chimed in so thoroughly with his own inclinations. For generations it had been a custom that each son of the house

should, for a time, bear an army commission. Which particular army mattered not at all. The one into which Dick was sent, through an enormous exertion of influence, marched under the flag of a certain Continental power. The flag mattered as little to Dick as it did to his people, but he loved the life. Unlike the others of his kin, he would have taken it up seriously as a profession. But then the crash came.

It was in no way his fault. A silly woman, a treacherous friend, and a husband roused to reluctant jealousy, form a combination of characters as old, probably, as humanity itself. In this case the woman was the young wife of his commanding officer. She had pursued the handsome subaltern in vain, while being herself pursued by the false friend. It was to this man that, driven by mortified vanity, she had turned at last, and it was he who wrought the final disaster. Dick, with all the chivalry which by such men is generally misapplied in cases such as this, had held his tongue. To his father, and to his father only, he gave a simple denial of guilt, without witnesses or proof of any kind. Appearances and evidence alike were overwhelmingly against Dick, and though in any ordinary case his simple word would have sufficed, all men know what the word of a decent fellow man is worth where the name of a woman is involved. So it came, for the first and only time, to bitter words between the two, and the son left, avowedly forever, with the last words his father spoke stinging his ears, and his heart filled with more bitterness than he ever had dreamed it could contain.

It was at this time that he met the friend—the common friend, as he had until then called him, of the husband, the wife, and of Dick himself. He would have hurried by, for he was in no humor to stop and speak; but he saw the sneer of triumph on the other's face, and the truth flashed across him. Instantly, acting on the impulse of the moment, Dick had accused him, and the other could not forego such a pleasure; but, grinning, admitted it. With his

open hand Dick struck the grin from his face, and left nothing there but

primitive, animal rage.

What followed was the one recollection of those days upon which Dick could look with a certain grim delight. Even yet each picture was as distinct as though conveyed to his mind by his physical senses, and as each one came before it, his eyes snapped, and unconsciously his step quickened in his sentry-like beat from one end of the suite to the other. He could see the grand old trees of a park that had just clothed themselves in tender green, for it was in the late days of spring. Almost could he hear the sleepy twittering of newly waked birds. It was under one of these trees that the man whom he had supposed to be his friend waited, with his seconds and a doctor. The presence of that surgeon was no formal sinecure; Dick had seen to that.

It was with sabres that they fought, and, once more, in his imagination, Dick could feel the first jarring engagement of the blades. He felt again the little thrill of joy as he realized that, while the other was no novice with the weapon, yet Dick was far his superior; and, without conceit, but simply as a fact, he reflected that he himself was the superior in that and kindred ways to any man he ever had seen. His antagonist of that day had been as good a swordsman as any. Dick did not wish to kill this man. In his opinion death was by no means the worst of evils, or even necessarily an evil at all. What Dick wished to do was to send him away from that ground a cripple, utterly unfit for the only sort of life that gave him pleasure or afforded scope for his undoubted talents. This Dick did, and in doing it added the last touch, if one were needed, to his utter ruin.

From the first, his victim had appeared as a disinterested friend, anxious only to prevent the affair between Dick and the woman from going so far as to be irreparable. Now, on the surface, it seemed that this man had been, solely on account of his disinter-

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ested conduct, wanfonly maimed for life. The consequence of this belief had been one which Dick had little anticipated. The world at large laid not only the wounding of a devoted friend, but also the blight upon the reputation of the woman, and subsequent suicide of her justly respected husband, solely

at his door.

For the opinion of the world Dick cared nothing at that time; the fact that his father had doubted him-more than that, had actually believed the worst of him-had so far overshadowed what the world might think that the latter sank into utter insignificance. There was but one other thing that mattered, and that was the girl-the only girlthe girl whose influence, all unknowing to herself, was the real cause of Dick having fled from an affair of any kind with another woman. He could not for years hope to marry her, outcast as he was, and to keep her bound would be unfair.

Therefore, taking his courage in both hands, yet with a hope lurking in the bottom of his heart that she might refuse to be given up, he sought her, but only to find that courage and hope alike had been vain. Though still very young, she was a year or so older than Dick. Beautiful, imperious, and sought by many, she had fought long against the giving of her love to a younger man. Now that his name had been connected scandalously with that of another woman, every instinct of pride within her was roused, and with it came a revulsion of feeling. She had spoken words even more stinging than his father had done, and then had left him, crushed and despairing, on a seat in her father's garden, where Dick had found her.

For a little time he sat, trying, in a confused sort of way, to rouse his stunned mind to a realization of his position, and to make some plans for the future, but this he found hard to do. Then there came a small whirlwind of crisp white skirts and long, black legs, both belonging to the girl's younger sister. Now, Dick never had been fond of children as such; at least,

that was his theory, though he admitted that he made exceptions sometimes in the case of an individual child. Whether this theory was born out by the facts or not, no one ever knew, for the exceptions were made in favor of every young human being with whom he came in contact, and they, without any exceptions whatever, adored him. This one had been an especial favorite. She flung herself upon him, crying bitterly, clasping him close, and almost crushing something soft between her body and his. Instinctively, he tried to comfort her, but she would not be comforted.

"I know you're not bad, Dick—I don't care what they say!" she managed to sob out. "They w-w-wouldn't let me, but I had to come and tell you. And I brought Cupid. I want to give him to you. He'll love you, and that may remind you that I love you, too, and—and always shall. I must go now—they may find me. Good-by, Dick, dear. Don't forget me! Good-by."

She covered his face with teary kisses, and then, with another rush of the abbreviated skirts and long legs, was away, the sound of her sobs dying out in the distance. Dick sat staring stupidly after her, still mechanically clutching the soft object she had left in his arms. A rose-leaf tongue that licked his chin caused him to look down, and then, for the first time, he saw that he held an infant bulldog, a fat puppy, with a wide smile and soft, brown eyes, like those of the child herself, whose chief treasure he had been. No gift could have been much more inappropriate for a man in his circumstances; yet Cupid had been with him through all the vicissitudes that followed, until at last the dog had ended his days through a plenitude of honored years. His eldest son, who much resembled his father, and who bore the same name, at that moment was reposing on Dick's hearthrug, from time to time turning uneasily in mild protest against the steady tramp of his master, which he recognized as something unusual, and disliked accordingly, as dogs will.

A man can drink of the waters of bitterness only according to the cup he holds; Dick's cup was a large one, and he had drained it to the last drop. Yet this gift, with the childish love and sympathy that had accompanied it, had touched him as nothing else ever had done, and there were suspicious drops on the snowy coat of the elder Cupid that day; drops of which Dick ever after was bitterly ashamed, but which nevertheless undoubtedly went far toward saving his life or reason. It was they, or rather the cause which produced them, that made it possible for him to think connectedly once more, and he thought hard that night. As he did so, the softening effect of the child's kisses disappeared for the time, and all his old bitterness returned with increased force, but he still was coherent in his ideas. He had need to be, for he must plan for a future apart from all he ever had known, and he felt that he must do it at once.

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It was not an easy thing to do, this rearranging of an entire life. He was utterly unprepared for maintaining himself by any ordinary means. By what means, then, could he do so? That is a question that many have tried in vain to answer, even with far more time and preparation than poor Dick had had. He could look back now, from those comfortable rooms, having succeeded in his own way, with something like amused pity for the troubled, struggling boy who was for the first time wrestling with the grave problems of life. But it was that night

that had decided him.

Not long before, Dick had met an old German, who interested him mightily. With a queer twist of his own, old Schultze was an anarchist of the reddest sort, theoretically. Personally, he was one of the mildest and most benevolent of men. Formerly, Dick had laughed at the bloodthirsty sentiments of this verbal wrecker of nations, but now he could not keep them from recurring to his mind.

"All the inhabitants of this misbegotten planet are either in the pike or the minnow class; either foxes or pullets," the old man had said. "'Rise, kill, and eat! It is thine—wilt thou not take it? Art thou a man, and darest not do this thing? Thou hast strength to brave all things in earth or elsewhere. Put out that strength, then, that all may know that there is a man in the world, and, knowing it, will not stand in the path of his desires."

From whom these oft-repeated quotations were made Dick had no idea, but now he saw in them a force which first astounded and then convinced him. They were true! All through animate nature one species preyed upon another. It was only the human animal who had perfected the art of preying upon its own kind. And who but those who had learned to prey in the most accomplished manner were greatly successful from a material point of view? None. It was true that in so doing they "made countless thousands mourn." As society was constituted, that was their right. But why should one be bound by the rules of such a society? Why should one not take whatever one wished, or could manage to get, from those who, being strong, systematically robbed the weak? Not by the methods that their so-called captains of industries were wont to employ; they did not appeal to Dick at all. Not only did they need a special training and the complex machinery which organized society has created for its own protection, but also they seemed to be the recourse of timid men, who feared personal risk.

Far simpler methods, and ones infinitely more suited to Dick's nature, would serve to gain what he might wish. If, in the employment of those methods, one of the adversaries should happen to lose his life, that was his misfortune; let each man fight with his own weapons. But it was to keep both what one had gained and the liberty necessary to enjoy it-it was there that the difficulties must arise, and to the solution of these difficulties, principally by leaving no clue behind, that he must devote his brains. This he resolved to do, and for fifteen years had done, at first crudely and in a small way, which grew larger and the operations more perfect as practice brought proficiency.

Dick was not given to vain retrospects or self-analysis, and so he had gone steadily on in the path he had chosen, determined to be contented with what it brought him, and to be proud of the way he had triumphed over the enormous forces against which he battled. In the main he had succeeded in both these desires until lately. Then, try as he might, he could not entirely suppress certain vaguely uneasy stirrings of his old nature—the nature that had been his before the crash came, and which he thought had for fifteen years been smothered and dead. could not in the least understand it. Clearly, in some way it was the fault of The People Across the Hall, as he had become accustomed to calling them in his own mind. But why should it be? That was the mystery.

They were in no way remarkable, these People Across the Hall, save for the voices of two of them. At first Dick, whose accurate estimates of his fellow beings was a most important part of his stock in trade, had regarded them as so commonplace as to be uninteresting; just a young couple, with one child, well bred, and in moderate circumstances. Probably there were tens of thousands of the same sort in New York, Dick told himself, but he knew that, so far as he was concerned, it was not true. No other woman and no other child in the city could have voices which would have affected him as the voices of these two did, and yet, there was nothing especial about the voices, save that they were agreeable; and except that one was an octave higher than the other, they were ex-

actly alike.

He never had seen any of the three face to face. Once he had a vanishing view of the woman's back as she entered her own flat. Evidently she was a thin little wisp of a thing. He thought it exceedingly unlikely that she had any great personal attractions, so far as he thought about the matter at all. He had not the slightest desire to make her acquaintance. In fact, the reverse

was the case, rather. He wanted, during something like twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four, to get away to some place where he never again would hear them speak; they made him think so much of things that had been, arousing old pains to new life.

But he did not go, and each morning the voices aroused him from sleep. The People Across the Hall were earlier risers than he; probably the child attended to that. Their bathroom was separated from his only by a narrow air shaft, and he could not help but hear every word that was spoken.

There was nothing in any way remarkable in their conversation; it was just the intimate chatter of a thoroughly united and happy family. Still, in the course of time, he gathered from it some of that family's affairs, its little troubles, its hopes, and its fears. All of them were centred largely, it seemed, around something which they had nicknamed "The Demon." Should this Demon eventually turn out to be beneficent in its nature, the family troubles and fears were forevermore to vanish, and its hopes to be realized. Of the nature of this thing Dick could gather nothing; they never went into These people were much given to nicknames. She called her husband "Cogs," for example, he spoke to her as "Jack," and the child was simply "The Kiddy."

In spite of himself Dick grew interested in these humdrum details, though he never would have admitted Yet every morning he lay in his bed and listened to them, from the awakening call of the child until, bathed and dressed at last, they all three went into their breakfast and out of his hearing. Then he would rise himself, and then it was that the old recollections which these voices roused began to intrude so insistently upon his mind, and it was then that he would curse these voices, wishing that either he or they were away, and again would resolve to leave, only to break his res-

olution once more.

Then there had come a time when the joyous tone of these voices changed. Apprehension crept in, then something like terror. Not despair, as though the worst, whatever that might be, had happened, but fear of something impending; the maddening suspense caused by some Damoclean Now and then Dick would sword. hear the woman sobbing in the night, and once or twice her husband's clumsy attempts to comfort her. In the morning, too, more than once The Kiddy had gone through some of his little antics, which always before had been greeted with a laugh, but failing now to obtain that, he would beg her not to cry, and try to console her with kisses.

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All this got on Dick's nerves. It was enough, he said to himself, as he tramped up and down, to get on the nerves of any one-enough to give one the jumps for all day to have this sort of thing served up, not only in the night, but the moment one woke in the Well, one thing was certain, morning. Well, one thing was certain, at least. He did not intend to go over again a train of thought such as had been forced on him that day by the voices and their new misery combined. Either the People Across the Hall must brighten up once more, or he must leave the house. They were bad enough at their best; in their present state they were insupportable. He wondered what this trouble of theirs was, and what would be necessary to straighten it out-money, or what.

Then, suddenly, he stopped short in his tramping and cursed himself aloud, for he had realized that it was not only on his own account that he would like to help the People Across the Hall in their trouble, but on their account as well; in other words, that his sympathies had been roused, and by some individuals whom he never really had even seen, and about whom he knew nothing, save what he had heard them say. For all these years he had been trying to put weaknesses of this sort behind him, and almost thought he had succeeded. They would not do for one who pursued the line of conduct which Dick had made such an eminent success thus far-they led to disaster in the end, and, like some other luxuries, must be denied. But to think that now he had fallen back out of his rigid selfcontrol in these, as in other ways why, it was simply disheartening.

Taking up his hat, he started to go out. Cupid II. started to follow, as a matter of course, only to be ordered roughly back, and to have the door slammed on his astonished snub nose. For a little time, in an abominable humor with himself and every one else, Dick tramped the streets, but not for long. very They were crowded; stands made of new, sweet-smelling planks reminded him that a procession soon was to pass that way. With the utmost sincerity and fervor Dick cursed processions and all who had to do with them. He hated crowds. He hastened back, but before he could regain his rooms the first band was passing it, and he could hardly worm his way through the throng of spectators. He reached his door at last in a temper still worse than when he had gone out. With a grunt of relief he entered, and found another surprise awaiting him.

On one of his front window seats Cupid was sitting, gazing with solemn gravity into the street below, while by his side, with one arm around his neck, knelt a very small boy, with tousled yellow curls. Dick stopped short.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. The small

"Hello!" he exclaimed. The small boy heard him, and, turning, descended from his perch, and came politely toward his involuntary host, holding out a grubby little hand.

"Hewwo," he returned. "I came to see ve sod-yers."

"Evidently," rejoined Dick sharply.
"But how did you get in? Don't you know you've no business coming into rooms like this, without permission?"

Dick's servant had been out, and when Dick left the rooms they were, as he supposed, securely locked. To find that they were not both surprised and alarmed him, and, therefore, he spoke more gruffly than he knew. For a second or two the little fellow stood looking at him, puzzled; then the astounding fact filtered into his brain that there might be one place in the world where he was not welcome,

where his presence did not give pleasure. His extended hand slowly fell until it rested on the head of Cupid, who had jumped from the window seat and was seated beside him. His lower libegan to tremble, but he controlled it bravely, and, winking hard to keep back the tears, made reply.

"Don't you wike me?" he asked. "Don't you want to wook out here an' see ve sod-yers? Ven I'm sor-ry, an' I'll go. But vis dog, he wikes me," he added wistfully, and Cupid, as though quite understanding, got up, wagged his tail, and sat down again.

Dick was by no means proof against that appeal, or that of the four brown eyes, strangely alike, that looked up so directly into his. From the first he had recognized that voice, with its queer little upward inflection and its difficulties with the "th" and "l." And he felt that The Kiddy's presence there, in his rooms, had caused him a pang of pleasure so sharp that it was closely akin to pain.

"Of course I 'wike' you, old man," he hastened to reply, with perfect gravity. "I'm very glad, indeed, that you can see the 'sod-yers' from these windows. But I was surprised, you see, to find you here at all. How did you get in—do you mind telling me?"

"Ve bathroom," replied The Kiddy, with some impatience at the triviality

of the question.

"The bathroom? I don't quite see, I'm afraid. How do you mean?" Dick asked, more puzzled than ever.

With an impatience which, despite his politeness, he could not now conceal, for with each second the soldiers were passing, and all the time the martial strains, badly mixed, of many bands, sounded in his ears, The Kiddy took his host's hand and led him to the bathroom window. He reared on his toes and looked out.

"There!" said he, patting with one hand a narrow steel girder that passed from one window to another. "I climbed on a chair an' walked over on vat. It was easy as walkin' on ve curbstone—easier. Now, come on

back!"

But Dick did not come back at once. He gasped and shuddered as any woman might have done. Bloodshed he had seen in plenty. Some of it he himself had caused, and it had affected him not at all; it was part of the game. But the vision of what might have been, of those baby limbs crushed and broken on the cement floor below turned him faint and sick. As though in fear that it might still happen, even though he was there to prevent, he gathered The Kiddy in his arms, and, carrying him swiftly back to the window seat, placed him there with considerable emphasis, at the same time calling to Cupid to hop up beside him, which Cupid very willingly did. Dick sat down beside them, and The Kiddy slipped an arm around his neck. For some time they watched the passing show in silence; then, with a blare of trumpets, some batteries of field artillery came by.

"What are vose?" asked The Kiddy, pointing with a pudgy forefinger.

"Guns," answered Dick.

"Wike what ve ovver sod-yers have, onwy bigger?"

"Why—yes, I suppose that's so, in a way."

"What are vey for?"

"Oh, to batter down houses, and—and that sort of thing, you know," Dick replied, rather puzzled to give an answer which his small inquisitor could understand.

"An' to make ve people inside, ve men inside ve houses go dead?"

"Well, sometimes that happens, of course."

"Ain't it wicked to make men go dead?"

"Not always, Kiddy."

"When ain't it?"

Now Dick was more troubled than ever to find a suitable answer, but he tried his best. "It's hard to say, old man," said he. "Suppose some one was trying to kill you, or to do a great harm to you, or to some one you loved, or was bound to protect—take care of, you know. Then—"

The Kiddy interrupted him. The procession forgotten, he turned, and

threw both arms around Dick's neck, looking eagerly into his face. "Like ve Bad Man?" he demanded eagerly, enforcing attention to his question with a little shake. "Like ve Bad Man, vat makes movver cry?"

"I suppose so, Kiddy, if there is such

a man," Dick answered.

"Vere is. An' he makes her cry all ve time. An' once I saw daddy cry, too. Could we get one of vose big

guns, an'---"

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For long, Dick had systematically disregarded all inconvenient social usages, but now the reluctance to hear from the lips of this child what undoubtedly was a family secret, was as strong as it ever could have been, even in the old times. He heaved a long sigh of relief, therefore, when the flow of questions was interrupted by a thundering knock at his door. Cupid jumped to the floor with a low growl, and Dick saw that something was loose and ready in his hip pocket before answering the call. There was nothing to fear, however; only the wisp of a woman, her face showing deathly white, even in the semi-darkness of the hall, and her husband towering behind her.

"Is he here?" she gasped. "Our boy, I mean. We can't find him. We sent to the police, and all; but no one has heard of him. So we came to ask

you."

"Yes, he's here, and quite safe," Dick replied. "I'm sorry you were so alarmed. He came in to see the parade pass, you see, and he's looking at it now. Won't you come in?"

He did not tell her by what route the boy had come; she was frightened quite enough without that. She waited for no second invitation, but outstripping both the others, ran into the front room, to make sure with her own eyes that what had been said was really true. The other two followed more slowly, The Kiddy's father blundering forth apologies as they came. They found her with The Kiddy in her arms, smothering with her caresses his determined attempts to tell her of the way he had found to extricate them all, by the use of field artillery, from

the wiles and machinations of the Bad Man, and much displeased because she would not listen.

She looked up as they came in, and for the moment her relief had made her seem, for the moment, happy, and wonderfully young. Her hair had tumbled partly down, and lay in some confusion around her small, oval face, and her eyes were red from weeping, as a child's might have been. As she looked at him, Dick saw, with a shock that for the moment almost unnerved him, that which took him back to the times of which he had tried so hard to put out of his mind, and which so persistently had obtruded their memories there. Now, in a flash, he understood the mystery of those voices. The long, black legs were hidden now, but all else was there, unmistakably. For a moment, he struggled to master himself; then called Cupid to him, and his self-control had prevailed habitual once more.

"Nita," said he very quietly. "Perhaps you may like to see what Cupid looked like when he grew up. This is his son; he looks precisely as his

father did at the same age."

The girl—she was no more—looked up, half frightened. Then she sprang to her feet with a little cry of joy, and, running to him, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him with as hearty good will as she ever had done as a child.

"Oh, I say!" remarked her husband. She turned to him with a laugh.

"Why, this is Dick, you goose!" she cried. "Dick, that I've told you about.

You can't have forgotten!"

"Forgotten! I should say not!" said the other man, laughing now in his turn. "You never gave me the chance, even if I'd wanted to. You know," he went on, "that even before we were married she always vowed that of all her loves, Dick—"

"Bannister," interrupted Dick.
"Eh?" said the other, dropping his hand. "I don't understand. The Dick

I referred to is named—"

"Bannister," put in Dick again. He stepped back, close to his wife, his face full of puzzled suspicion. She gave him a conjugal dig in the ribs with her elbow. "Of course it's Bannister now—if he wants it to be, Cogs," said she. "Don't you re-

member-can't you see?"

"Oh, of course—stupid of me," said Nita's husband, his face clearing once more. "Well, I'll run along now—I must recall that alarm we sent in about that precious son of ours. You and Jack will have a lot to talk about, Bannister. I'll be back shortly—you'll dine with us, of course. Until then!"

He kissed his wife, and, with a wave of his hand, was gone. Nita returned the wave, and then, gathering The Kiddy, who now showed signs of sleepiness, into her arms, she threw a sofa cushion on the floor, and squatted on it, as she had done when last Dick knew her. He laughed a little at that,

and so did she.

"It does seem so good to see you again, Dick," said she. "All these years we only heard of you once. Then it was that you were suspected of turning pirate, or something of that sort. Wasn't it funny?"

"Not so very," he replied gravely.
"It isn't true, however. I've never
been a pirate, though I've thought se-

riously of it."

She laughed again, thinking it was a joke, as he intended she should. "Anyhow, you never forgot me," said she.

"No," he replied simply. "One doesn't forget the only true and constant friend one ever had, Nita."

Again she looked up at him, the corners of her mouth drooping. Then she hid her face in the blouse of the now sleeping Kiddy, and began to cry

softly.

"But I wasn't a constant friend, Dick," said she very softly, after a little. "You see, years afterward, when I thought I was grown up, I got to believe that what they said about you was true. You see, you'd gone away, and not been heard of, and everybody said it, especially—"

"I know. Your sister. Go on," in-

terrupted Dick.

"She, too, but only a little. No, I

mean the man-you know-the man

"I know," said Dick, the lines about his mouth tightening.

"He made love to me, and I—I believed him. He was crippled, but not so badly as they thought he would be. And I was flattered, and for a little I fancied I was in love with him, too. I wasn't. I was only like a thousand other silly girls. I wanted to be in love, like the girls I read about. And I wrote him some letters—and he kept them."

"He would," agreed Dick.

"He did. And then Cogs came along, and I knew what love really meant. He's an inventor, you know," she explained proudly. "Machinery and things that I don't understand. That's why I call him Cogs. He had invented a most wonderful machine-to set type; it is better than can be done by any other machine, and faster than by hand. It was on account of this that I met him, for he came to my father and to yours with letters, and they went into his company. He-the man, you know-went into it, too. He had to do with selling the stock, somehow, and had charge of it. Then he forged people's names to the stock papers—I don't know what you call them-

"I do," said Dick. "Go on."

"Well, after he had forged them, he got money on them, somehow. Then it came very near being found out. It's likely to be found out now at any moment. And he says that, if it is, he's going to say that Cogs did it, and if Cogs denies it, he's going to publish those letters I wrote. You know what that'll mean, Dick."

Dick nodded. He did know what it would mean in the country where it would be done. No matter how innocent those foolish little love letters might be, they would forever blast the reputation of the woman who had written them. It would mean that his father and hers would have nothing to do further with her or hers; that, if Cogs admitted the forgeries, he would be branded through life, after being imprisoned, as a criminal. If, on the

other hand, he refused, his wife's name would become a byword, and they would be financially ruined besides, by the withdrawal of all financial support—the two fathers could and would manage that. Altogether, he never had known anything that, for real villainy, could equal this little plot. For some minutes, he sat thinking; then Nita glanced timidly up into his face, and shuddered.

"Don't, Dick!" she exclaimed. "I'm afraid of you when you look like that!" "You needn't be," he replied grimly.

"You needn't be," he replied grimly. "You know that perfectly well. But listen, Nita, for I haven't much time. You heard I had turned pirate, and I told you, truly, that I had not. But I'm near enough to it for all practical purposes—near enough so that I'm not a safe and proper person for you and Cogs to know—no, don't interrupt me. I mean what I say, but it'll hurt me far more than it will you, and I'll always keep track of you, and some day I may see you again. I hope so. But, any case, a pirate is a useful friend sometimes. Tell me where this beast lives, will you?"

"At the Axminster—at least, he's stopping there, now—but, you don't

mean-mean to-"

"Kill him? No; I don't mean to do that. Now I want you to go, dear, and take The Kiddy with you. I have a lot to do. Say good-by to Cogs for me. I probably won't see you again, but you'll hear from me. Good-by."

For a moment, she hesitated; then, lifting her face to his, she kissed him, and went obediently as she was told. Dick looked after her until the door closed behind her. Then he sat down at his desk, and wrote a note to his servant. It was very short. He said in it:

Pack up at once. Meet me at the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans. Take only what is necessary. See that the inclosed is given to the lady who lives in the apartment across the hall before you leave. I have disposed of the things, other than those we brought here with us, to her.

Then he signed his name, and that was all. The other note, which he then

wrote and enclosed in it, was shorter still:

I want you to have the pictures and furniture and so on for The Kiddy. My man will see that you are placed in possession. You will hear from me once more soon, and I hope, as I said, in the future.

He took a roll of money from his desk, slipped a shining derringer in his pocket, and started toward the Axminster on foot; he did not care to be identified by more people than was necessary, and a cabman is always sought for if witnesses are required. Already his simple plans were made. Dick's plans always were simple; that is why they were so successful. Though perfectly well aware of the value of surprise, he invariably avoided, when possible, anything that verged on the theatrical; that was not only cheap, but dangerous to the last degree.

Though many times bound on errands of something the same nature as this, always, before, they had been in his own behalf, and he never, try as he would, had been able to conquer a strong feeling of repugnance at the business which made them necessary. Now, however, his soul sang within him, and he had no more doubts of attaining his end than if it had already been done. For he felt that lawless or not, his errand was a righteous one, and he hummed a little tune to himself as he swung gayly up the Avenue and

turned into Broadway.

He did not send up his name, of course. A glance at the register told him the whereabouts of the rooms he wanted, and he went from the desk direct to the ornate lift. No one objected. Dick was not the sort of man that prudent tradespeople of whatever kind willingly take the risk of offend-Arrived at the door, he paused and listened. His good fortune was with him, and in a few seconds a waiter emerged, bearing a tray of empty glasses. Dick noted this. The man evidently had been drinking, and his nerve would be that much less. advanced to the door, as though to knock; then turned and addressed the waiter.

"Is the gentleman in there alone?" he asked.

"Didn't they tell you at the desk, sir?" the waiter asked suspiciously, in

return

"No. I didn't ask. But I want to see him alone, and I thought it possible when I saw those glasses that some one might be with him. If there is, I won't go in."

As he spoke, Dick felt in his waistcoat pocket, a movement thoroughly

understood by the other.

"No, sir; there ain't no one else in there," the servant replied. "Them glasses is all his. You can go right in, sir; the door ain't locked."

"Good!" said Dick, and put a large bill into the expectant palm. "Just stand here by the door for ten minutes or so until I come out, will you? I may need you."

The man put down his tray, and Dick, opening the door without knock-

ing, went quietly in.

As Nita had said, the man had been crippled much less than Dick originally intended. A little stiffness was evident in the right arm, but nothing more. He was bending over a table, writing busily. He showed no effects of the drink he had taken. Dick remembered the fact that in the old days he rarely did, and how he, himself, envied him in this regard. He had aged hardly at all; he would be recognized at once by a person who had once known him. Dick wondered that he had not seen him, but then reflected that he went about very little in public, ordinarily. For some seconds, Dick stood, observing at his leisure, while the other, probably thinking him the waiter, did not look up. But at length the scrutiny made him uneasy.

"Well—what is it you want?" he asked, with the strong foreign accent which Dick remembered so well.

"Your attention, Cipriolini," replied Dick, in his most quiet tones.

But had those tones been the explosion of a magazine, they could hardly have had much greater effect. The man sprang to his feet with an inhaled breath that was half a scream. Then his face turned a sort of slate color, and he sank weakly back into his chair again.

"You here!" he gasped. "You dare

come here?'

"Yes. It doesn't take much daring," replied Dick, with some scorn.

"You have me at a disadvantage. I cannot help myself. Are you going to kill me?" he stammered weakly.

"Probably not. We'll speak about that, later. In the meantime, you'll be good enough to give up those letters—now!"

"What letters? That is—suppose I haven't got them?" asked the other unsteadily, for his nerves, as Dick had surmised, were shaking, and the last word had been snapped out in a way to startle even healthy ones.

"I want them, now, I said," remarked

Dick, ignoring the evasion.

"Suppose I haven't got them?" re-

peated the other.

"But you have got them, and so we won't suppose anything of the sort. I haven't much time to waste here, Cipriolini."

"And if I don't give them up, then

ou'll---

"Yes, then I will—or if you give me false ones. I've no time, as I said, to waste."

"And if I do?" faltered Cipriolini,

weakly playing for time.

Dick banged his hand upon the table, so that the man started again. "Cipriolini, you're probably the most contemptible scoundrel that I ever knew, and that is saying much. Now, you'd better listen, for I shan't speak much more. If you give up those letters, it will be at your own option, up to a certain point, whether you ever will be arrested and tried for those forgeries or not. If you don't, I will kill you-and I will shoot you in such a manner that your end won't be pleasant, though it will be sure beyond the power of any surgeon in the world to mend. I see you looking at that drawer. Open it if you wish. You can't draw any, weapon quick enough to harm me;

you know that. Now, I've said all I intend to until those letters are forth-

coming. Do I get them?"

Cipriolini opened the drawer toward which his eyes had been wandering, and, drawing forth a little package of envelopes, still faintly scented with violet, tossed them on the table. Dick took them, and, extricating one from its envelope, held it, unfolded, in his left hand. His right hand was free to act should occasion arise.

"There are matches by you, there. Light one," he commanded, and after one or two attempts the other did so. Dick held the corner of the paper in the light, and the two watched it while it burned too close to hold, and then finished in the great silver ash tray. The others—there were but five of them —went the same way. When the last one was but a crackling, black ash, Dick drew his derringer from his pocket, and, laying it on the table, spoke again.

"Here's your option," said he. "I'll wait outside for ten seconds; you won't need more, and that won't give you time to get scared. If I hear nothing then, I'll return. Good-by. I'll see

you later-possibly."

He left the room, and found the waiter where he had been left. Dick approached him gayly. "Well, my man, you won't be wanted, after all," said he. "Still, I was rather longer than I expected, and I think you've fairly earned a little more."

Again he handed out a bill, of such a size that even the waiter of an establishment such as the Axminster made a half exclamation of surprise. There was no danger of his immediately forgetting Dick's face, and witnesses sometimes are desirable, as well as the re-

"I'm sure I thank you, sir," he began, then broke off short and listened, as a report, muffled by the heavy doors, sounded from the room within. "Lord, sir! Wasn't that a shot?" he asked.

sir! Wasn't that a shot?" he asked.
"Sounded like it," Dick admitted
carelessly. "I'd go and see about it,

if I were in your place."

The servant opened the door. Dick heard him give an exclamation of horror. But, without haste, the outlaw walked down the stairs, tarrying long enough in the office to enclose certain envelopes in another, address, and mail them. Then he walked carelessly out into the sunshine of Broadway.



UNQUESTIONING

OH, what's the use of This and That?"
The querulous do cry.
"Whence have I come? Where am I at?
Oh, Wherefore? Whither? Why?"

Pray put no problems such as this
To me, for don't you see,
The very fact that what it is
Sufficient is for me.

I seek no explanations of
Things I can't comprehend.
I only know there's nothing Love
Can't quite completely mend.

John Kendrick Bangs.





HEN a feller's got his feet draggin', and with nothin' but a grip on a wet carplatform post to keep him from droppin' down on the rail to be split like a salt

herrin', it's mighty apt to make him rummage round in the bottom drawers of his idea chest to find a fittin' text

for the occasion."

Turning his grizzled head, "Brakebeam" Tompkins ran his fingers through his tangled, yellow-gray whiskers, while his faded blue eyes blinked down upon a large gang of—what he termed—"hunkies," who were working in the railroad cut a hundred feet below us. "Brakebeam" was a timekeeper on the new branch of the Q. & X. road in northern Montana, and—as he put it—"just watchin' others suffer." Removing from his lips a disreputable, smoke-stained, clay pipe, his watery gaze wandered back to my face, and his seamed old forehead and leathery cheeks cracked into a droll smile.

"Just that kind of a layout's spread for me once," he cackled, "on the H. & D. Road, back in South Dakota. It certain looks like I stands to lose; but I reads the play wrong, for the 'Old Lady' who handles life's deck deals me the hand which I has dreamed of hold-

in' ever since I was a kid.

"One black, stormy night, I gets fired from a freight by one of them gents that thinks they can give Old Jim Hill or 'Bond Dividend' Harriman points on railroadin', whether it's in the operatin', wreckin', or waterin' departments. I'm handed my tie-pass at one of the finest paper towns that ever springs out of the alkali dust, and the only thing I sees is a big water tank that has a room built under her for the keeper. There's a lantern hangin' by the door which, as I'm reachin' for the latch, swings open, and the ugliest phiz I ever has the privilege of lookin' at pokes itself out and hollers:

"'What'n hell be you hangin' round

this tank for?'

"I sees the mug ain't no gentleman, but I overlooks his onpoliteness and strings him that I'm huntin' the leadin' hotel, as I needs a porterhouse and mushrooms, immediate.

"He swings his glim in my face and shows his breedin' by laughin' out,

most sarcastic:

"'From the flashlight pickter I gets of you, I feels confident that the spread in this corner of the Garden of Eden won't do for you, for this tank's the town, and I'm the whole population. But, if you wants to put up with me, the mener is fat pork and sody biscuit, with Arbuckle's, straight, to wash 'em down. Price—lodgin' and breakfeast—one plunk. If this don't suit your pampered taste,' he grins malicious, 'the next stoppin' place is sixteen miles up the track—due north.'

"His voice sort of falls downhill, as if he's quit, and I'm just startin' in to close the deal, so I moves for the door—it's rainin' scandalous—but he throws

up his arm, sayin':

"'Gents without baggage pays in ad-

vance.'

"Them few words makes me revise my prior notions considerable; so, 'stead of acceptin' his highway-robbery proposition, I hands him a line of talk on the 'universal brotherhood of man,' and the duty we owes to the stranger who strays within our gates. He counters by sayin' that he's read all of them kind of works and believes in 'em strong theoretical; but that practical he's found that while such doctrines works fine for the stranger, they ain't no good for the man who buys the pork. And he concludes, positive and final, that the only talk he'll stand for is the kind that money makes.

"Seein' argiment is futile, I tells him that, though a wanderer, I still has a conscience which is so easy jarred that I dassan't accept his bed and board at the measly price he names, for it would sure be robbin' him to do it. But, seein' my hunger ain't ragin' like it was, that I'll just come in, sociable, and set with him till the shower is over. He ain't needin' company, for he jerks his head inside, and the next second he pokes a gun under my nose that looks to me like a thirteen-inch cannon. When he makes this play, he only says one word, but I understands him as well as if he talks an hour. The word

he uses was: "'Git!"

"Well, I'm just catchin' my stride when I hears a train, and turnin' I sees a headlight down the line. She whistles twice, which means water, so I sidesteps through the alkali mud, and brings up on the north side of the tank. As the train starts out I makes a dive for her, but my foot slips and the next thing I knows I'm draggin' like I mentions previous.

"I tries desperate to pull myself up, but she's movin' too fast, and I sees I can't make it. Then I realizes that it's time for the last rites for the dyin', and I digs for some proper words to pass over with; but, it bein' longer'n it ought to be since I'd been to meetin', nothin' strays into my head but 'Hold the fort, for I am comin'. Them not bein' reg-

ular Gospel, I ain't ca'm'd much, and I gives a yell that's sure heard in New Orleans. The rain was splatterin' down in my face and my fingers begins to loosen, so I shuts my eyes to take the final count. I'm just goin' when somethin' nabs me by the scruff of the neck and I'm yanked through the railin', onto the platform, so raspin' that it spoils my legs for kilts, perpetual.

"I was sure glad to scrape acquaintance with this gent who grabs me back from eternity just as the door is closin'. I attempts to hand him my thanks, but I'm that shaky and nervous that I can't say a word. He sees what's the matter and puts some 'first aid for the injured' to my lips and, when 'bout half of it has gurgled down my throat, I comes out of my trance and wakes up

his slave for life.

Then we does the formal, and I finds his name is Kinkaid-George. His folks is dead, and all the estate that they leaves him is a honored name. George is a graduate from some down-East college, and when he leaves his almer, he believes, implicit, in what his professors has told him 'bout learnin' bein' the golden key that always unlocks the iron door of opportunity. But after he's tried his sheepskin on 'most every lock from the Battery to Harlem without even movin' a tumbler, he wakes up and sees that what really turns the bolts is four tons of pull to each ounce of eddication. Seein' he has the combination reversed, he concludes to try his Eastern misfit on the West, where grads ain't quite so thick, and it's easier to get a 'stand in,' which is how my life happens to be saved.

"George has only been hoboin' a couple of months, but spite of his learnin' and his high-toned talk, he's a mighty decent kid, so it ain't long 'fore we gets plumb sociable and friendly. And before daylight comes we swaps opinions on everything from the Big Stick down to the leadin' lady in the

last New York murder case.

"With the risin' of the sun, the clouds dry up. We're ridin' along through the wheat fields, and the grain is just gettin' ripe. Far as we can see

it's rollin' and tumblin', like a yallergreen sea, as the mornin' breeze comes chasin' out of the West to lick up the water that's been spilled on the fields durin' the night. From the stovepipes of the shacks the smoke was curlin' in lazy twists, and once we gets a whiff of fryin' bacon and boilin' coffee. belt's drawed to the last hole, and this aromy appeals to me powerful, so I proposes that we beat it at the next stop; but George wants to go farther north, where he's heard they're needin' hands, harvestin' some late oats. I lets him know, very tactful, that personal I ain't lookin' for toil, as what I wants is a section where the handouts is good, with work scarce and all the jobs took. As he's only a kid and lackin' experience, I points out to him that a man who works-except in self-defense-lacks them finer instincts which marks the born gentleman.

"'Don't the world owe me a livin'?"

I asks him.

"He looks at me a minute, wearin' a grin that makes me oncomfortable 'fore

he says:

"'Sure, the world owes you a livin', but when you tries to get it without workin', ain't it a harder job than if you was gettin' your envelope regular every Saturday night? I holds'—he laughs when he says this, but looks boyearnest-'that a man, rich or poor, who can, but won't, work, has mighty little excuse for livin'. No sponge is ever a gentleman. See?'

"I don't see, and I knows it ain't so, for I has belonged to the leisure class all my life, and heard 'em talk; but I lets it go, as I sees he's one of these here cranks on the labor question. He sits thinkin' a second, and then he puts it to me straight, that if I'm goin' to travel with him I've got to work whenever we can get a job. It's like tearin' my heart out to go back on a lifetime's theories and practice, but the way he saves my life gives me a regular dog love for him, so I tells him I'll stick by him if it kills me.

"'Dad, you're a brick.' "I wipes my eyes so I can look

straight at him, and says:

"'Son, I'm a damned old fool,' and

we lets her drop right there.

"Between the con and brakey our pass is took up at the next stop, and the next mornin' we gets a job shockin' Norway oats. The straw of this Norsk plant is the size of a hazel brush and a good six feet long. Every bundle that drops from that old twine binder which we're follerin' handles about as easy as a water-soaked log; so you don't have to have no very picturesque imagination to savey how I feels after liftin' a few thousand of them sheaves 'tween

sunup and supper.

"When we quits I'm all in, and 'Son' has to help me to the house, where he gives me the last of the 'aid' which I feels confident saves my life again. After the pint has had a chance to work I revives, and we goes to the long chuck table where, for the first time in my life, I eats like a hired man. From here we moves along from place to place till we strikes a big ranch in North Dakota. We gets there late one afternoon and finds we're wantedbad. The weather's hot, and the grain's come on unexpected fast, so they've brought in the machines for miles around, to be ready to start in the next mornin' on a 'patch' that's dead ripe, and will go to shellin' if it ain't down by night. Did you ever see a real wheat farm? No? Well, this is the biggest one in the world, and Son and me looks her over 'fore a swath is

"I'd seen lots of wheat fields, but when we gets up on the cupola of a big granary and sees this chained, yellow ocean that's ripplin' all around us, it comes mighty near takin' my breath away. There's been a shower, half an hour before, and the heavy wheat heads has their long beards splashed with little drops of water. While we're standin' there, the sun comes out and with it a stiff breeze races down from Manitoba; and, in a flash, for miles around us, forty thousand acres of dancin' grain sparks and glistens like a tossin' dia-

mond mine.

"The next mornin', as the sun is pokin' his red, dry face over the Minnesota timber, the ranch boss is headin' his army that's marchin' on the patch, which is a mile wide and two miles long, and it's got to be in shock 'fore we gets our supper. Strung out behind the boss is just an even hundred binders, each one of 'em bein' pulled by four crackin' big Missouri mules. The boss stops and standin' in his stirrups, he raises a little flag and waves her a couple of times, then he drops it. When she falls the snap of a hundred whips, that's reachin' for the off leader's ears, cracks the line's salute to the Stars and Stripes that's headin' the

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procession. "Then the first binder swings into the grain; fifty feet back comes the second, and the others foller regular, till, when the hind one cuts in, the front one's near two miles away. When they're all at work, there's a strip of wheat, eight hundred feet wide, fallin' with every step of them mules, and the clicking of the sickles, as they bites off the straw, rattles like a rain of rifle bullets smashin' 'gainst steel. Trampin' along comes two hundred of us grabbin' the bundles as they falls, and makin' them into shocks. For the first time in my life I feels almost as if I wants to work, but I s'pose I'm made a little looney by seein' the flag and hearin' the steady firecracker-pop of the driver's whips, which takes me back to my kid days so that I fairly smells the Fourth of July powder. But I recovers from this attack of second childhood 'fore night, when, as the sun is hidin' in the Bad Lands, we completes the job and starts back for grub. As we're walkin' along Son grabs me, and says:

"Look at her,' pointing to the field where I has allowed my enthusiasm for Old Glory to nearly kill me.

"The dark was fallin' and, in the dusk, them thousands of wheat shocks 'pears like the tents of a sleepin' army. I ain't no sentimentalist, but, as we stands there, the big, copper, harvest moon peeks over the edge of the prairie, and the way its risin' white light silvers that tented field and ripples over the noddin' grain around us would sure have made me spoony if the lady

of my heart had been leanin' on my arm. We watched her for a minute, silent; then the horn blows for supper, and we leaves dreams—for pork and

potaters.

"We're hooked up strong when we quits this ranch, for we've been gettin' big wages and workin' steady. One night we finds ourselves on the N. P. Road in the Jim River Valley, and George proposes that we beat it for the North Woods in Minnesota, so we slides into a cattle car that's goin' Here we finds fifteen more of the perfesh, and as some of 'em has come from sixty or seventy miles back it makes me leary that they's a nigger roostin' round somewhere; but, when I spreads these notions before Son, he 'lows that it jest proves that it is possible for a railroad man to have a heart—which is agin' my experience, but I lets it go at that.

"'Bout midnight we pulls in on a sidin'; in a minute the car door slides back and five men jumps in. Three of these gents wears bull's-eye lanterns

and Colt's forty-fives.

"'You're our prisoners!' yells one of these bandits. 'Hands up or we goes

to shootin'.

"Mine flies up, automatic, for if there's any argiment on earth that's sure to fetch me it's the front end of a gun that's pointed my way. Thirty other arms was clawin' into the atmosphere at the same second that I grabs for the infinite. But George is stubborn, and wants to know by what right they're assumin' to hold up a party of gents that's travelin' peaceable.

"'Under the law of the Sovereign State of North Dakoty,' says the gun man.

"'Has you a warrant for all of us?'

inquires Son.
"'Yep,' says the gun.

"'Well, you'll have to show it 'fore you can take me and my friend,' says

Son, mighty fierce.

"'Here she is,' he snaps, throwin' up his gun, and puttin' a bullet in the crosspiece just over the kid's head. After exhibitin' his warrant, he hollers out:

"'Throw up your dukes, and do it damned quick, or the next one'll go

through your head.'

"Son stops arguin' sudden, and reaches for the crosspiece as if he's huntin' the lost warrant to see if it's made out in legal form. Then these hold-ups makes us into a livin' chain by slippin' handcuffs on the whole bunch. Soon as this is done satisfactory, somebody from the outside slides in a chair and a little table, which is follered by a fat, baldheaded guy, who seats hisself, comfortable. Layin' a big book in front of him, he hammers on the table and sings out:

" 'Order in the court!'

"And I has a new sensation. I certain thinks I'd seen every style of low courts in the United States, but I conceeds that this cattle-car variety is plumb new and novel to me.

"'Your honor,' says the shooter, 'you has to deal with the most desperate gang of criminals I've ever met up with in the twenty-five years that I've been pursuin' the bad men of the frontier."

"'Sech bein' the case,' observes the court, casual, 'we'd better be on the safe side, and I hereby orders you to search 'em, for seein' they're fleein' the State, it's a sure thing they're all

well heeled.'

"It's more'n an even bet that there's been as upright judges as this gent, but I swears there is never a wiser one, for there wasn't a hobo in the bunch that ain't got a roll of at least a hundred, and some of us is over two hundred strong. When the robbers has removed our weapons and piled 'em on the table the court counts 'em over and announces 'twenty-five hundred and sixty-seven' as the total armament of the bunch.

"For a minute or two the judge and his pards keeps their eyes glued on that bundle mighty avaricious, and we're all lookin' at it some longin' ourselves. Personal, I never has so much money before in my life as I'm forced to contribute to the pile that the court's runnin' its fingers through so clingin' and sentimental-like. My share of it represents my lifetime's savin's; and when

I thinks of the recent backaches that it stands for, and I sees the pudgy, greedy fingers of that fat little outlaw toyin' with my bank account, I has a brain storm that would have sure meant his death if I'd had the drop on him and wasn't takin' any chances myself. As the smoke from this mental explosion is passin' away, I hears Son

say:
"'Whatever does this freight-carcourt play mean, anyhow? Don't you
the sacred know that you're invadin' the sacred liberties of freeborn American citizens' -he rolls this out fervid-'when you takes their money and chains 'em up like convicts? And -he makes this awful snappy—'I demands that you releases us, immediate; and that you returns us our money which we don't propose to have stole in this sort of

"We all cheers these remarks, but the court raps for order and says, look-

in' sort of grieved:
"'Sech a kick as you makes is done either through mule ignorance or total depravity, and, to do my duty, I should fine you for contempt of court; but'he stops a minute and scratches his nose, reflective-'I guess it won't be necessary,

"Then he closes his eyes and ruminates again for a few seconds, when he

shakes his head and says:

"'No; I won't fine you, for I'm sure it ain't necessary.' And turnin' to his pal who fires the gun, he says: 'It's a fortunate thing for this court, officer, that you and your deputies is here, with your revolvers, to maintain the law, for that man who just finishes talkin' is the most desperate character I've seen since we begins holdin' these -harvest terms; and-

"'Desperate or not,' breaks in George, 'I wants a answer to my question. What does all this funny busi-

ness mean?

"'Which I explains,' announces the court. 'You're all charged with burglary and, to speak low and common, you've been caught with the goods, so there ain't no doubt of your guilt.'

"At this Son rips out somethin' that's

soulful, but not much for pious, and follers it with:

"'You're due for a lot of trouble if you tries to carry this joke too far. I guess they won't no real court find us guilty of burglary just for stealin' a ride in an empty cattle car.'

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"'My misguided young friend,' replies the squire, ''fore you're through with this deal, you'll find it ain't no joke. For I gives it to you straight that this is a real court; and that as you've been ketched in flagrante delicter—so to speak—I has the power to bind you over to the next term of the district court. The fact is, you gents is up against it—strong. If you'd stole the road and was carryin' it off in your pocket the law wouldn't touch you; but when you opens a car door to steal a ride—well, you burgles.'

"Then he takes a little leather-covered book and reads:

"'Any person who shall break and enter any railroad car for any unlawful purpose whatsoever, shall be deemed guilty of burglary in the second degree, and upon conviction therefor shall be confined in the penitentiary, at hard labor, for not less than two nor more than ten years.'

"When he finishes readin', he sits starin' at us with his little pig eyes, givin' them words a chance to soak in, and when he thinks they've reached bottom he gives an inquirin' cough, and says:

"'Now, gents, which would you rather do? Go to jail for five months till your trial comes round, or give cash bail'—he's fondlin' the roll—'and continer your travels?'

"I'm puckerin' my lips to holler: 'Bail for mine,' for when I hears them words, 'two to ten years in the pen at hard labor,' money ain't no object to me; but Son's too quick for me, and tries to argue with that biased court.

"'But the law you reads says 'break and enter,' and it's a sure thing we don't break into this car. All we does is to slide the door back and step in, same as your outfit does when you come in here to hold us up."

"'You're wrong again, my ontootered friend,' answers his honor. 'Shovin' back the door when you're doin' it unlawful, as you does when you steals this ride, is breakin' as defined by the courts.'

"When he quits, one of the bunch, that's been touched for near two hundred, sings out:

"'How much a head does you ask?'
"After toyin' with the bank roll for a few seconds, the court smiles sort of insinuatin', and says:

"'That depends on whether we makes these proceedin's harsh and—formal, or conducts 'em—as I may say—friendly and—informal.' Then he lops back in his chair and waits for a rise.

"'What does you mean by this formal and informal racket?' inquires Son.

"'If it is done regular,' answers the squire, 'I puts down your names—or if you won't give 'em, I John Does you, on this docket; and has the conductors'—he points to one of his gang who's holdin' a railroad glim—'sign a information; and then I binds you over. If we handles it irregular, the proceedin's is oral. Bail formal will be five hundred dollars; but informal, for I sympathizes with you gents, I'll make her a hundred and fifty a head; and this'—touchin' the roll—'just lets you all out.'

"'You don't figure her right,' remarks Son, sarcastic; 'the bundle averages a hundred and fifty-one a head, and you're overlookin' seventeen dollars which is sure a nity.'

lars, which is sure a pity.'
"'You're mistook again, my fresh
young friend,' says the court, very
pleasant and affable. 'The seventeen
you mentions is left out intentional to
grubstake you, if you concludes to
give—as I may say—vanishin' bail.'

"This seems some liberal for such a set of highbinders, but there's a terrible holler from them that's been shook down for more than the hundred and fifty. But the roar don't do no good, for his honor holds that it has been a common crime that we commits, and that—friendly—our roll must be held as common property in these bailin' proceedin's. There's still a lot of kickin', and some of the bunch uses

some mighty expressive words to tip their feelin's, which the court rules don't show it proper respect, and he pounds on his table and yells:

"'Officer, see that order is maintained in this court,' and the shooter swings his gun up and down our line, and everything becomes ca'm and peaceful. With the broodin' of peace, Son takes another whirl at the squire

by sayin':

"Then the layout as you unrolls her is this, is it? You claims we're guilty of somethin' that gives you the power to bind us over to court; but you won't make no record, just takin' our money and callin' it bail."

"'You're right, for once,' answers

the court, smilin' cheerful.

"'To put her straight,' says Son, 'you and your pals holds us up and

steals our money?'

"'I thinks,' replies the squire, a little hurt, 'that you might find a easier word to express your ideas, for the proceedin's bein' quasi-judicial, I gets your money—as we might say—under color of law. If I puts this through formal, at a hundred and fifty, the State'll get the roll. As the cards lay, you're bound to lose anyhow, so makin' her informal don't hurt you none, and I fails to see why you cares who wins.'

"'If we've got to lose,' says Son, 'I guess it don't make no real difference where our money goes; but, on the level, I thinks you ought to declare us in on the play and make an even divvy

with us.'

"'As a individual, I'd like to do it,' says his honor, lookin' mighty sympathetic; 'but, judicial'—puttin' on his legal mask—'it can't be did, for to take less than one fifty cash bail on a pen offense would sure ruin any court's reputation if the story ever gets out. And now, gents'—his face freezes, and he's cold as ice—'it's up to you to say whether we'll proceed formal, or'—he melts into a buttery smile—'make er friendly.'

"Son does a little talkin' to the bunch and then calls on 'em to vote. And, with hate in their souls and murder in their hearts, they votes, unanimous, to settle-friendly. With this the court puts on a lovin' smile, and says:

"'The con tells me, that seein' the bail money's safe, he figures that your fare is paid to the end of his run, which lands you in Moorhead, Minnesota, where, as you're fixed now, the courts won't bother you.' Then he says to his man Friday: 'Release the prisoners,' and passes over the seventeen, which is handed to us as our bracelets is unlocked.

"While this is bein' done, two of the thieves keeps the muzzles of their guns pointin' our way and, as the last case note is handed over, the engine whistles, and that freight-car court adjourns, siny die, and in another minute we're movir' along again with a mighty weak bank roll, but a sure enough ticket across the Red River.

"At daylight, when we pulls over that stream, Son and me finds a beanery, where we stows away a couple of days' rations. 'Long about eight o'clock we're in the yard lookin' for transportation, when I notices an engine and two cars standin' on a switch. She's headed East and I sees that the rear car is fitted with old-fashioned. wooden brakebeams, extra wide, which makes 'em as comfortable as a rockin'chair. It's rained durin' the night, so there won't be no dust, and I suggests to Son that here's our chance. George never draws a brakebeam ticket before, but he's game, and, soon as I puts him wise to fixin' hisself so as not to drop off if he falls asleep, he slips under the platform of the hind car and reserves his seat, while I takes one in front of him, just ahead of the trucks. We're only sittin' there a few minutes when the train pulls onto the main line, and we go flyin' down the road. We've been runnin' along for 'bout an hour, at a forty clip, and are makin' into a sand cut, when I sees Son give a lurch and fall off.

"When he hits he turns over a couple of times and then stops, stretched out, like he's all in. The next second the air's thrown on so sudden, that I'm handed a crick in my back that I ain't over yet. The train makes a quick stop and starts to backin' up to where Son is lyin'. Soon as we gets to him I hustles over where he is. A brakey and a nigger porter is down side of him lookin' him over, and there's a mighty handsome, black-haired girl standin' there, that seems to be bossin' the job. I butts in prompt and asks if the gent is croaked, which is the first time I've been noticed.

time I've been noticed.
"'No,' says brakey, 'but who's he, and who the—' He looks at the girl

and saws it off.

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"Before I answers, I removes my antique and bows, profound, to the young woman; and when I speaks I selects my words, careful, for I knows what is due to the fair sex.

"'Respected sir,' says I, 'this young gent is my adopted son—Mr. George Kinkaid, A. B.; and, wherever cars run in this broad land, I passes current as

Brakebeam Tompkins.

"The girl sort of snickers, but don't say nothin', and I gets down to business and helps swing Son onto the car. There's a big fat man standin' inside that the young lady calls 'papa,' and, as we gets the boy stretched out, the old gent passes a bottle to the coon, who pours some reviver down the kid's throat, and he comes to, immediate. When he opens his eyes he ketches sight of me and cracks some of the sand off his face by grinnin' out:

"'I forgets the strap, Dad.' Then he sees the girl, and his big blue eyes is starin' into her black ones—we're movin' along by this time—when the train stops with a bump. The engine gives three quick toots and reverses, at the same time givin' a long screech which is answered by another, dead ahead.

"The con leans out from the platform to see what's up, and hollers: 'Smashup, sure,' and jumps. But we're movin' back, and the train that's comin' manages to slow down enough so the engines only butt each other. While we're jarred hard, nobody's hurt, and they ain't no damage to speak of. It's the Overland that's bumped into us, 'count of some mistake of a lightnin' jerker.

"While they're cleanin' up the en-

gines' noses, the passengers from the coast train flocks out, and everybody hears how Son's fallin' off the brakebeam saves a awful wreck; for it sure happens; if we goes on, as we meets the flyer on a curve in a big cut that has banks fifty feet high. Course, bein' his partner, some of the glory which they invests Son with falls on me; and, as he's restin' private, the grateful passengers deputizes me to hand him their respects in the shape of a bunch of money they's chipped in. I know that Son's dead opposed to this way of earnin' the needful, but I ain't, so I accepts her thankful, and, not wantin' to hurt his feelin's, I never says anything to George about this testimonial.

"Finally, everything is clear, so we backs up for a switch about two miles behind us, and the Overland goes cheerin' by. By this time Son is in fair shape, havin' only been shook up hard. He's washed the sand off, and as we gets goin' again I peeks through the door and sees his blond head restin' agin' the back of a big leather-covered chair. This is where his eddication gets in its work, for he's talkin' away to the girl and her dad in the kind of language you reads in books. The girl-Margaret, the old gent calls her-only chips in a word now and then, but 'fore we're fifty miles down the line she's corkscrewed more information out of him than I gets in the three months I've been trav-

elin' with him.

"Papa's a big, Western railroad man, and we're on his private car. And say, it's a beaut. I'm 'fraid to walk inside of it, but Son takes to her like a duck to water. Papa's so grateful to the kid for fallin' off and savin' all their lives—that's the way he puts it—that he wants to do somethin' handsome for George. He talks money, but Son hands it out flat that he don't want and won't accept no such token.

"'Well, what can I do for you?'"
"'Give me a job on your railroad where I'll have a chance to get to the front,' answers Son.

"'But you don't know nothin' about railroadin',' objects papa.

"'I never understands,' laughs the kid, 'that the big places requires anything more than a good head for figures, and I'm way up on 'rithmetic.

Somethin' in that; somethin' in that,' splutters the old gent, and goes into a brown study from which he's waked by Maggie, who catches his arm and says, with one of them smiles that no old man can stand up against:

"'I've got it, papa. Make Mr. Kinkaid your private secretary. I don't like the one you has now, and'-she's strokin' dad's hand mighty hypnotic-'you don't really like him, either."

"He purses up his lips and scowls a minute, then he breaks into a grin,

"'Margaret, you has a very wise head, and I now sees that what you mentions is exactly the thing; but'he sort of pinches her cheek-'I never knows till this minute how much I dis-

likes the feller I has now.

"Then he turns to Son and asks him if he wants the posish, and without waitin' for a answer, he explains the job and the perks that goes with it. Soon as he rests, George does the thank act and the thing's settled. When I sees my pard slidin' away from me, I gets a hankerin' for railroadin' myself. Bein' a awful modest man I stands in the door twirlin' my straw, tryin' to get up nerve enough to make them desires of mine known. As I'm ponderin', papa's eye lights on me and he calls out:

"'Come in, Brakebeam,' and I ambles in. 'Kinkaid tells me,' says he, 'that if it hadn't been for you, he wouldn't have been on this train, so it seems three of you takes a hand in savin' us from bein' smashed. You puts Kinkaid aboard, he falls off, and Margaret sees him and has the train Now, what can I do for stopped.

you?

"I'm some flustered to know what I does want, 'cause I fears I may name somethin' that has too much work in it. Son sees that I'm in distress, and he guesses what's the matter, so he takes a hand, hisself.

"'If you allows me a suggestion, Mr. Perkins,' says he, 'I thinks my adopted dad has the makin' of a first-class timekeeper on others' work; and,' he adds, winkin' at me on the sly, 'I guess nothin' would suit him better.

"'Would you be satisfied with that kind of a place, Brakebeam?' inquires

the old gent.

"I comes back prompt that they ain't nothin' that I can think of that's nearer Heaven than to draw pay for seein' others work. Papa throws his head back and roars, and when he's quit laughin' he wipes the tears out of his eyes, sayin', real feelin':

"'Brakebeam, I sympathizes with you, and as long as I'm bossin' things, you'll have just that kind of a job, so you can consider yourself at work, with

pay beginnin' to-day.'
"Then everybody laughs, and I hands him my kindest and scoots for the

platform.

"While we're flyin' along, Son and Maggie is gabblin' away in some furin tongue, so I don't know what they're savin,' but they's laughin' plenty and sure havin' a good time. Papa's snoozin' in a leather chair, and I seats myself on the platform, where I feels natural, and goes to ruminatin' on the beautiful vister that I sees stretchin' out before me so onexpected; but we pulls into St. Paul and I comes to earth again.

"In a few days Son is holdin' down a chair in the president's office, which he vacates a spell ago by request of the old gent, who makes him general manager of the whole Perkins' system. And, as you sees, I has realized my lifelong dream of drawin' pay for

seein' others work."

The snow-capped mountains were reddened by the setting sun as Brakebeam knocked the ashes from his pipe. Rising, he started toward the caboose standing at the end of the cut, but turned at the sound of my voice.

"What becomes of the girl, you say? Oh! She claims that she's got the hardest job of the whole bunch. She's managin' the general manager.





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HEN Madame Landowska comes finally to chronicle her life, the passage on her close associations with Tolstoi and his family will be the one to hold her readers

most intently.

It is the fortune of some artists to have picturesque experiences that lend peculiar charm to their careers, though of such hers will stand independent. The line that she has chosen, the revival of the harpsichord, the clavecin, and all the old keyed instruments of a half-forgotten yesterday, place her in a class almost alone. In addition, she has written much on the subject, including a book, shortly to be translated into German from the original French.

At fourteen, she ended her course at the Warsaw Conservatory, studying composition under the teacher of Paderewski. From then on she worked alone, appearing first as a Bach player, at Berlin, and afterward as exponent of the old keyed instruments in concert

tours through Europe.

Between times the Tolstoi visits began, and of all observers with literary equipment who have gone to him, she is, perhaps, the only one to have known the Russian through months of association as a member of his household.

Madame Landowska is small, slight, with much reserve strength in her

quiet manner; a clear, pale face makes more apparent the power of her brown eyes; her dark hair, worn in the style of Botticelli pictures, heightens the unusualness of her appearance. In manner she has an adaptability that settles her gently and unobtrusively in her surroundings, making her part of them: one can well fancy her in that Tolstoi household as one with it.

This sense of adaptability—or is it the power of self-effacement?—she proved one night last summer, in a way that gave it a dramatic import which people of the theatre would be the first to grasp. It was at the Chopin fête at the Trocadéro, and to her was allotted the distinction of playing a group of the composer's numbers on his own piano, the one that figured at his death when Countess Delphine Potocka sang the hymns of Stradella and Marcello to him for a last time.

Madame Landowska dresses simply always, yet there is a something individual about it that impresses even a man who could never recall what women wear. That night she appeared a figure slipped from between the pages of a fifteenth century missal. Gliding noiselessly across the big stage, bending, absorbed, above the instrument as she played, simply and reverently, she became an unreal figure belonging to years long sealed, bringing in her hands a message out of silence, to fade back presently into silence again.

Of Tolstoi, she gives a fresh glimpse in her description of musical nights, when she played to him from four in the afternoon until midnight, with a samovar of tea and talk between. In March of last year, accompanied by her husband, she went to Russia with a harpsichord from Paris brought along. Two sledges were in waiting at the station for the final lap of the trip through freezing cold and whirling snow, their driver blinded by it once into losing his way. "But we were happy with all the Tolstois waiting for us."

Three pianos are in his home, and in music Tolstoi finds the one luxurious relaxation of his life, playing duets with Tanieff of the Moscow Conservatory, or listening to Madame Landowska at the piano and harpsichord in

furn

Mozart, Haydn, and the earlier Beethoven works are favorites with him, but before them all Chopin stands his preference. And why? With all his rigid discipline, his frugal régime, his pruning away of things the world regards as joys of life, "he is," as Madame Landowska explains it, "still the aristocrat; he has retained unaffected his wonderfully fine manner, and, another evidence of it, his love of hospitality."

Tolstoi's theories and practice, deeprooted though they may be, are not sufficiently strong to efface the effect of early surroundings or the taste bred with them. So the poetry, the elegance, the finish of the aristocrat of all composers make the most congenial appeal to him, though I do not doubt that he himself might stubbornly refuse to yield to this reason as the truth of it.

Madame Landowska describes, and as all the world knows, life at the Tolstoi home as a very simple one; but, what all the world does not know, she tells of a life far from colorless, as one would picture it, with music every day, and gay folk dances under the big trees, in which his eight children, his doctor, and his friends—though visitors now are only those on closest intimacy—take part.

And Tolstoi still keeps his sense of humor. It had been widely printed that Carnegie had offered him a million dollars to use as he would in philanthropic causes, and that he had refused it.

"What did you say in reply to him?" asked Madame Landowska's husband.

"Nothing," was Tolstoi's answer.
"Nothing?" came the surprised question.

"Certainly; he never offered it," re-

torted Tolstoi, slyly smiling.

But, to me at least, the beautiful phase of the Tolstoi home life is the devotion of his wife, of that self-effacing, tireless, practical kind, of which only a woman is capable. When his life is written by one both informed and discerning, full justice may be done to the part that she has made in it, though that I doubt, for the type of woman that she is covers up effectually every possible trace of her own importance that the importance of the man she loves may shine the greater.

The photograph of her that Madame Landowska showed me proves all this. The large, gentle eyes, full of sympathy; the broad, thoughtful forehead; lips strongly sensitive and capable of eternal silence; an expression of supreme, motherly womanliness. Often the whole night through she is copying into legibility his articles or answering letters; and of these latter hundreds come, members of the household and friends having to lend a hand with them. People write to him on every conceivable subject, as Madame Landowska learned, letters intellectual and letters ignorant, even letters containing photographs, and asking: "Shall I marry her?"

A deep grief to Tolstoi was the second banishment of Prince Tchertkoff, once a great friend of the old czar, and a man who had turned both wealth and position into a force for the Tolstoi propaganda. For this he was exiled until the adoption of the constitution allowed his return to Russia. Buying an estate near that of Tolstoi, he founded a colony with thirty young peasants. Among the many photo-

graphs of Madame Landowska's Russian sojourn, there is one of herself and her husband, driving in a sledge to give a recital at that same colony; riding ahead, on horseback, is Tolstoi, determined, alert, firm in the saddle, for all his eighty-one years. About them are a vastness of pine trees and reaches of snow, through which sledge and rider are forging their way in bright clearness showing the cutting cold.

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During my last stay in Paris, she received a letter from the Tolstois telling of Tchertkoff's pending second banishment. His wife, being too ill for removal, a delay of two weeks was grudgingly granted. Then came a second letter; the forced respite was ended. It said: "And my best friend is now exiled for my principles."

One night Tolstoi spoke to Madame Landowska of his wish that she should go to America, a wish of her own, as well, which she is planning to fulfill; and, leaning forward, his keen, deepset eyes glistening under their white, shaggy brows, he uttered this splendid sentiment: "In America there are more humanity and sympathy than in all Europe."

Quiet Yvette Guilbert. That is the impression, away from the stage, that she conveys to-day. Fifteen years ago, her tawny hair, the sudden wicked upward tilt of an eye, a thin arm, more individual in its angular sweep than any rounded one; to-day, a deepened, mellowed mind, one that has lived so diligently among the poetry of France that it has absorbed a charm as subtle as the perfume which clings to hands working lingeringly among roses.

For the stage she keeps still all the old characteristic traits in her impressionistic pictures, and to them she has added, and doubtless will add, new resources; for her art is a very live one. But I was scarcely prepared for that other change, away from the border lights, that had come over her.

On my way to call on her that afternoon in London, there had come through the dismal wall of mist and

rain a group of recollections of the times I had talked with her fifteen years back; of an introduction aboard a train sweeping up through Indiana on its way to Chicago; of an interview at the Auditorium Hotel there, and a concert that I had been supposed to criticise and almost forgot, because she was so much more interesting than any orchestra; of a pair of long black gloves of the kind she used to wear, and that I very much wanted and received, brought reluctantly by a maid, French and thrifty; of a caricature that she drew of herself, writing underneath: "This is Yvette Guilbert when she is handsome, which is seldom."

If one, in a London downpour, can sum up vividly such impressions after fifteen years, it must surely have been a charming woman to inspire them. And I hastened to unburden my mind to that effect, quite shamelessly, in the presence of her husband, who agreed with a prompt alacrity that showed him to have been thinking the same thing for a very long time.

She said only, with her unsparing frankness: "Fifteen years mean nothing to a man, but they are a terrible thing to a woman."

To her they seem to have meant a new Guilbert rather than an older one; in five minutes I had learned the reason why. By taking an intense interest in life in a fresh channel, she had forgotten to reckon the passage of time. In those fifteen years she had been studying the poetry of her countrymen, searching out lines long dumb to give them speech through her ardent fancy.

"It is my life," she explained. "If I did all that is in my mind I should need two centuries in which to accomplish it. There are so many things to do, new poets to find, the new in the old to rediscover."

Two reasons are at the root of this; strong literary instinct that has gone on steadily maturing, and a happy married life with Doctor Schiller, a man whose tastes are not only in keeping, but a perpetual incentive to her own.

Done up in folios about the room were parts of books, fugitive poems,

poems in manuscript, among them a collection of songs with the music by Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Consolations of the Miseries of My Life," he called it, composed in the days when he did not know that he was himself a poet, and asked of writer friends some words, that he might earn a little by setting them to music.

"Sometimes," she confessed, "we arrange to go to the theatre or the races, and end up instead with a walk in the woods and the garden, quiet and

content."

Fifteen years back, who would have pictured this of the Yvette Guilbert who planned a tour simply by drawing a straight line between Kansas City and New Orleans, where she wanted very much to go, as they spoke French there, who took a passionate, uninformed interest in Oshkosh and Kankakee, because they sounded like Indian rites and hidden mysteries?

Then, with all the consequent gayety of her songs, which those who did not speak French ardently enjoyed as being worse than they really were, who would have pictured this sedately serene mind and limpid thought of the seri-

ous student?

The gay little songs, some of which were in her old repertoire, she still sings; the quiet drollery, the tilt of an eye, the grimace on a word that conjures up the whole key to the story, they are still there. But, quite independent, there is an ability to take up lines holding no story, no humor, only beauty of thought, and with her gift and study to make them stand out a picture.

This note of change strikes more fully when one remembers the humble beginnings that her spark allowed escape from. Her Café des Ambassadeurs' days would have satisfied the ambition of most, for with the Parisians she lived in a glorified haze of her own creating, when her object in life seemed the finding of new songs in that field which the old ones had spring from.

The earlier part of her life reflected. in a way, the glare and the mot of the

boulevards; the latter part, after long contemplation of many poets, finds her a poet herself, with the distinction that she is also a philosopher, which many

poets are not.

Of this last estate, there was proof in her assertion: "In one artist there must And of her seriousness there was this reminder: "People have no idea how one must eternally read to get one single song. From the French poetry of the fifteenth century I have got much that is beautiful, and we have fine boys coming on to-day in France. But of all lines the difficult ones to do are not those telling a story, but the ones conveying philosophy and fine thought. Then it is a struggle to give life to the words. Of course, it is hard to do what one would like, for instance, in English; not Shakespeare, for there the pronunciation bars me, though in Burns and the old folk songs, not so classical for beauty of the language, a sketch of the spirit is enough. It is a strange thing, this spirit of a song, and how it may penetrate people, even without any knowledge of its language, like, 'I want you, my honey, yes, I do.' In Paris, I introduced it every night into a comedy that I was doing; it made the success of the piece. The audience did not understand a word of it, and yet its spirit got into their hearts.'

Take, too, the, in itself, meaningless refrain of the song, "Le Quatre Freres et L'Ella," a song of the sea, of drowned men, of others who go out to meet their fate in depths that give no man back. "Heave, ho, yo-heave-a-ho," this refrain senselessly goes, yet with every repetition of it she stamps deep a whole reflection of the lines it follows, each pair with different meaning from the other. In this aspect, she is an object lesson to all singers; it is not alone the word, nor the mood, which she adds to it, but that intangible thing, spirit, the overtone in the mind of the poet without which his lines may live, but with which they are

and how does she get

And how does she get at it? By leaving the music as an afterthought and studying the poem in a way peculiarly her own, not line by line, for that, she believes, destroys the power of the words, but by first reading it repeatedly, to get the outline, and then, without what may be termed the outward help of ear or vision, picturing it in her mind, each verse alone thirty times in repetition. When the whole poem becomes fixed, every shade of expression and thought worked out, she first sings the song that has been learned in absolute silence.

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It had been a gay family supper that night in Berlin at Madame Carreño's, and the charm of it all was the individual importance as a unit in family life that each one was made to feel. Those children of hers will have memories of a big mother-heart to take into the world with them, for through the years she has been the one to unflinchingly hold home together.

Last season a round of concerts through Europe, this a tour of the world. "To keep things going here," she said quietly, the weight of separation already realized to an extent that took a big courage to face.

Earlier, there had come to the drawing-room the sound of a Bach invention, practiced by unwilling fingers and with a mind far away. The player, who presently entered, was her daughter, Eugenia, by the marriage with

d'Albert, the composer-pianist, "And to think," said Madame Carreño, with a pretense at injured feelings, "to think that you are the daughter of two people supposed to be pianists."

"But you will be through some day, won't you?" I asked of the blushing girl next me. "And then may I manage you?"

"Yes, and you shall have half the proceeds," she retorted, overgenerous at her rescue.

Apropos of it later, Madame Carreño wrote to Paris: "Eugenia is practicing very diligently, and will be ready, I think, for that tour in 1980."

With those children of hers, though, to whom she has given so much of her life, there is no forcing into a groove of her choice, but a gradual settling down into one of their own. Her daughter, Teresita, a fine pianist, is the mother's chief aid in teaching; the son, now studying in Rome, gives marked promise as a baritone. But she herself has met the years with an enthusiasm and sympathy too young not to enter with heartiness into her children's life plans, whether they happen to lie within the boundaries of music or outside it.

In our tour of the music room later that evening, we came almost at once upon a photograph of MacDowell, the composer, made in his teens, when Madame Carreño was his teacher, and the best art influence in his life.

"He would not memorize then," she recalled, "and in urging him to it one day I made a bet. We were both to play Chopin's 'B Minor Scherzo' by the next day without notes; if he failed I was to kiss him as punishment. Blus':ing scarlet at mere thought of it, he started at once for the piano. And the next day he had not learned it! played it, to his surprise. But the truth of it was I had known it for years. And then began the chase for the forfeit. Upstairs and down into the cellar I ran after him, he in an anguish of bashfulness. And his rage when I inflicted my threat! For days he refused even to speak to me.

"We were great chums; his mother and I were always together. I did not teach him; it could scarcely be called that," she added, as modest disclaimer. "I stood over him while he practiced."

After her last tour of the world, and longing for home and children, she delayed her return that she might take MacDowell's father and mother to Italy, "Those two dear old people," she told me, with big-hearted feeling, "had seen their life hopes blotted out by their son's misfortune and death; for in him their every deed and thought had been centred. Life had no more meaning for them; they would have died if something had not been done to lighten the thought of it, if only for a little. And I was so glad to do it.

"That father and mother gave up their home, everything, to help develop the genius that they felt their boy truly had. Though no couple could have been more devoted than they, for three years they separated, that Mrs. MacDowell might go abroad with Edward. He was treated like a prince, dressed like a prince, and had the advantages of a prince, while his mother toiled to make the three rooms they lived in a home. She was charwoman, she scrubbed the floors, she did everything.

"What sacrifices those parents made! What despair his end brought them! Yet," flashing up, "in all that has been written, not one word of them, of their great, splendidly self-denying part in

his life, has been said!"

Some of the best recollections of Madame Carreño of those photographed friends in the music room were of the modesty and self-effacement of two of the greatest among them, Brahms and Rubinstein; Brahms, whose highest ambition as he wandered about Vienna was to be mistaken for a brewer, and Rubinstein, who was always afraid that

people might know who he was—as they invariably did.

The striving and straining of some to be unusual through being unnatural, like Debussy, came in for a touch of satire, his "Night in Granada," which is equally like a night on Staten Island, and his "Pavane on the Death of a Princess," a joke in the form of a dirge.

Then came Grieg, with memories of that day at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, after a rehearsal in which she had played his concerto, how he had suddenly appeared beside the piano, announcing, "I am Grieg," and all the answer her astonishment would allow

her was "Ja."

At the end of it all, there was an experience of hers on this side the world, after a long recital programme and encores, when, very tired, and leaving the stage, she came face to face with a music teacher; back of him in a row stood ten small children. Stepping in front of her, and proudly waving one hand at the line-toeing group, he announced: "Madame, these are my pupils! Will you kindly tell them how to play the piano?"



THY HEART

THY heart is like a woodland pool Where trees deep shadows throw, And wild and sweet like Elf-land bloom The shy frail roses blow.

The stars between the branches look
And in its stillness smile,
The butterflies poise there, the clouds
Sail by in friendly file.

The wild bird dips its weary wing, And lingers, loath to leave, The drifting blossoms round about A magic carpet weave.

Thy heart is like a woodland pool
With beauty ever fair—
Earth has no price I would not pay,
If I might enter there.

ARTHUR W. PEACH.





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N the early part of June, 1900, Chinese affairs were moving with unexampled swiftness. Prince Tuan and his followers, who for some time had been in open

rebellion, at last had become so indiscreet as to defy the powers which had sent warships to guide them in the way they should go. In fact, they shelled those warships. More than that, when the ships, by way of retaliation, not only bombarded the Taku forts, but also sent men ashore to take them, the opposition offered by these rebels amounted to a bloody and stubbornly contested battle. Such conduct on the part of a lot of Chinamen when opposed to Europeans was not to be borne. Uncle Sam, who up to that time had held aloof, playing the part of a spectator only, now felt that he must take a hand in the game.

Though we, stationed at the U. S. army post of Tarlaginan, long had expected this action, we almost gave up hope as the weeks dragged by and no move was made. So when at length there came the news that our nation was to play an active part, it had all the effect of a surprise. With the news came orders for Brigadier-general Redfield, our commandant, to report at once to Manila, and for me to accompany him. I was glad to go with my old friend. That is to say, I would have been sorry beyond expression had I been left behind. Yet it was with a good deal of regret that I superin-

tended once more the packing of my household gods.

In some ways, so far as I was concerned, Tarlaginan differed from other army posts. More memories were centred there, and memories are precious to a lonely old bachelor colonel and quartermaster, like me. Severely isolated, the place had been a little world in itself; a civilized little world, which I had seen grow out of a chaos of barbarian neglect. Not only had I seen it grow, but I, and many others as well, had helped that growth, and taken a keen interest therein.

Once having left the place, however, I had no wish to return there. Never again could it be the same. Still, in the army, one has little choice in those matters, and almost at once I was ordered to return on the little interisland transport that I might attend to the transportation of troops ordered down and supplies stored there which now might be urgently needed elsewhere. How strong that disinclination to return had been I realized when I discovered that, after all, it would be unnecessary. When, in the late afternoon, the little ship kicked her way into the nearest roadstead, which still was miles away from the post itself, we found that our coming had been anticipated, and that all was prepared

On a slope which rose behind the strip of ill-smelling mud, which served as a beach, there appeared the orderly lines of a canvas city, silvery white against the green; and the level rays of the sun now and then flashed dully

back from the blued barrel of a carbine as some sentry turned at the end of his beat. We did not drop anchor; the transport had to go on up the coast, and was due to return on the following But as the engines slowed, a launch coughed and sputtered away from the wharf, which I myself had built, and came alongside. As I went down the accommodation ladder I saw that three of the friends for whom I cared most had come off to meet me: Brinsley, a major in Redfield's old regiment, now in command of the troops that were about to embark; Helen James, his fiancée, and old Scott, who had been chief surgeon at Tarlaginan.

All chattering at once, like a lot of schoolgirls, they took me ashore and seated me under a palm-shaded tentfly, so placed as to make the most of what little breeze came in from the sea.

Then they bustled about, all three of them, and prepared drinks made gratefully cool by means of ice which I had thoughtfully brought with me. Sensi-ble people, in that climate, generally left such matters to the servants, and this conduct puzzled me, as any unusual action on the part of my friends always did. But when the drinks finally were ready, and there was no further excuse for pottering over them, the artificial chatter, after a few spasmodic attempts to live, died from exhaustion, and was succeeded by something closely resembling gloom in the silence that followed-a silence which was broken by Scott, who suddenly and without reason turned upon me.

"Hang it all, Drake, do stop sitting there trying to make yourself look like an Egyptian mummy. You can't do it. The mummy isn't so fat, but it's more imposing and a lot better looking. It's only in conversational ability that there's any resemblance. We want to hear the news, man; not to sit here and die of blue devils."

"There isn't any news that I know "Oh, yes; the of." I replied meekly. Ninth Infantry is under orders to sail for China.'

"And Washington crossed the Dela-

ware some time even before that order was issued," snapped Scott. "If you can't tell us something more recent than that, you might as well hold

your tongue.'

This again I took meekly. Had I behaved in accordance with my custom in dealing with Scott, I would have become furiously angry long before this point was reached, but now I felt no anger. All along I had known that these friends of mine must have later news than any I could give them; for days I had been at sea, while they never had lost touch with the end of a

It was Helen's face that gave me a clue, so white and drawn it was, while making such a determined effort to appear cheerful in an attempt to keep her fears from Brinsley, who even now had hardly recovered his full strength after his last wound and the ensuing illness. But no effort on her part could succeed in concealing the truth from the man who loved her. And one was apt to forget that old Scott's heart always had remained in the keeping of his bunchy, adoring little wife, now waiting for him in Manila, since he first had given it to her when he was a slim young medical graduate and she a plump schoolgirl, many, many years before. It needed some object lesson such as this to bring home once more to me, who had never gained or even sought the love of a woman, the realization of what war must mean to most women. held out my empty glass and Helen refilled it, while the others looked on with breathless interest, as men will look at trivial things at such times.

"How are things getting on at the

post?" I asked, taking a sip.
"Rotten," answered Brinsley suc-

"That's about it," agreed Scott, as I glanced at him, hoping for somewhat more detailed information. "It would give you the blues to see the place now that Redfield has gone and that doubledashed old invertebrate Swanson is in command again. Neglect and incompetence bring quick results in this climate, and they've told on the discipline of the men who are left and in every other way. Why, even those eternally condemned, saddle-colored Gugus are getting gay again."

"They are!" I exclaimed, in surprise. "Really, I thought that Redfield had settled affairs with the natives permanently."

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"He settled affairs for just so long as he was there to stand over 'em; not a minute longer," said Brinsley decidedly. "Our regiment, thank Heaven, is leaving there-and all the women are leaving with us."

"All the women-leaving with us!" I cried. "I didn't know that. Where

are they?"

"In that row of tents over there. The men call it 'the hen coop.' The one at this end is Mrs. Hopkins' tent."
"Good heavens! Hasn't that woman

gone yet?" I asked, lowering my voice, for the tent referred to was but a

very short distance away.

"I don't wonder that you're sur-rised," said Brinsley. "It's three prised," said Brinsley. months and more since that thief of a commissary husband of hers took himself off the earth, and three months, one would think, ought to be time enough for her to settle up her affairs. But here she is, waiting to go back with us. It took the fear of the Gugus to drive her away."

"Do be fair, dear, even thoughbegan Helen, but Brinsley interrupted

"If I wasn't fair, it was only because I wanted to be charitable," said he. "It's less discreditable to assume that she's leaving for fear of being boloed than because she wanted to shake MacNutt, isn't it?"

"MacNutt-the Devil Dodger!" I exclaimed. "Surely, you don't mean to tell me that he has had thoughts of the Widow Hopkins, do you?

"She blushingly announced her engagement a week or two ago, if that's any evidence," remarked Brinsley dryly. "She and the Devil Dodger went about behaving like a pair of spoony, rustic sweethearts. They had the whole post laughing at them."

"They didn't!" contradicted Helen indignantly. "The post wasn't laughing at him-or her, either-that is, not in the way you mean. And I wish you wouldn't call Major MacNutt by that horrid nickname any more. You know I asked you not to. I know, of course, that he was rather narrow-minded when he made that accusation against Tommy Pendale, but you know how he made amends. And I don't care if he is a political appointee; he's a dear, and I'm as fond of him and sorry for him as I can be."

"Sorry for him? Why are you sorry for him?" I asked, my curiosity now thoroughly roused. "Because he's engaged to Mrs. Hopkins? That would be enough, I grant you, to rouse any amount of pity, but I don't think it's what you meant. Is it? Tell me."

Brinsley shook his head. "No," said he. "It's the direct reversal of that case that rouses Helen's sympathy. As a matter of fact, I think she's wrong. It's far better, in my opinion, for the poor devil to have a sharp twinge now than to condemn himself to one continuous twinge for the rest of his life, as one might say."

"But he's so unhappy, poor thing! And he might never have found out that she's-well-undesirable, if she'd only have behaved herself," deprecated

Helen.

"But I don't understand what it's all about," I protested. "Tell me, won't you? You, Helen. You seem to have some rudimentary sense left, which is more than I can say for the other

Brinsley grinned; Scott bristled, and undoubtedly would have offered battle but for the fact that Helen began to speak before he could collect his scattered thoughts for the onslaught.

"There isn't much to tell about—not that we really are sure of," said she. "You saw for yourself, Colonel Drake, before you were ordered to Manila, how much Major MacNutt was taken with her. I remember your speaking of it. But after you left, and Lorilla eloped with that gambler, Hunt-

"Lorilla Hopkins eloped with Jack

Hunt, you say?" I cried. "This is the first I've heard of it."

"It's true, all the same," grunted Scott. "Made their getaway in a fishing práo, and where they went only they and the devil know. Go on,

Helen.'

"When Lorilla went in that awful way, and with that awful man, every one was sorry for Lorilla's mother," Helen continued. "So the post rather took her up again. It was only on account of Major Hopkins and Lorilla, you know, that she was dropped in the first place. At least, it was mostly on their account. And the one who offered the most sympathy, and that which seemed most acceptable, was Major MacNutt. He always had been thrown with her a great deal, you may remember, on account of his helping her to settle her husband's affairs. So, after a little, they announced their engagement. Of course it was very soon after Major Hopkins' death, but the post remembered what he had been, robbing the government, and so on, and overlooked that. They seemed very happy-like a pair of young lovers, as Jim said. If the post laughed at them it was only for sympathy. And congratulations came pouring in.

"Congratulations, to each other, because if the Widow Hopkins married MacNutt, we could get rid of her simply by having him transferred. The sympathy was for ourselves if we failed to work this plan," interpolated Brinsley. "I just thought I'd explain.

Pull ahead, Nell.'

Helen smiled and went on.

"Then, after a little, all the happiness seemed to vanish-at least, so far as Major MacNutt was concerned. I don't think I ever saw any one appear so utterly wretched. His face was tragic-and still is. It makes my heart ache to look at him. What brought this about we can't tell. The engagement, apparently, isn't broken. They're together only a little less than they were before, and he's come down here to see her off, though he is to stay behind. That's all we know."

"But, surely, even if you don't

know, you must have some sort of notion as to the cause of all this change,"

"We have," replied Brinsley shortly.
"That's it, if I mistake not."

As he spoke he made a motion of his head toward the sea, to which my back was turned. I twisted in my chair and looked. Already I had heard voices, but, not recognizing them, I had paid no attention. Now I perceived that the sounds came from Mrs. Hopkins and a man with whom she was walk-

Since last I had seen her, the gray hair of Mrs. Hopkins had turned preternaturally brown, and it now was arranged in some sort of a roll that stood high above her forehead, looking as smooth as though turned from a jelly mould, and a queer sort of wad behind. Her cheeks were pink-very pink, indeed-and her large, china-blue eyes, as expressionless as those of a kitten, were turned languishingly from time to time toward her companion, to whose huge, soft arm she clung as he helped her when she affected to stumble over the slight inequalities of the turf upon which the camp had been pitched.

Many times before I had seen Mrs. Hopkins in the company of various men, and with amusement, largely qualified by a sort of mental nausea, had noted the extremely youthful coquetry of her very mature years. But never had I witnessed so determined an aping of the charm of girlhood, resulting in such a hideous caricature of it and its innocent wiles. Previously, I had been accustomed to think of her simply as a silly, rather objectionable old woman; now she seemed fallen even below that estate. How any man could be attracted by antics such as hers I found it hard to imagine; yet that at least two men had been so attracted was amply proved by what I had just heard of the Devil Dodger, and what I then saw of the man who at that moment was with her.

I had never beheld that individual before. He was a civilian, his immense, shapeless form clad in immaculate white. Between the buttons of his soft shirt was screwed a large solitaire diamond, that glittered in the light. Another, even larger, was set in a ring that decorated one pudgy finger. There was nothing bad in his shrewd, though flabby, face. Every one of its many fat folds spoke aloud both of prosperity and vulgarity; that was all. "Who is that beggar?" I asked.

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"His name's Thompson, I believe," replied Brinsley. "He came up here from Manila with orders that we 'should show him every courtesy.' He was looking over timber lands, but some of the natives signified their disapproval of his presence there, and he hustled back to the post, and has stuck there like a fat mortgage ever since, until we came down here, and then he came with us, so that he could fly to Manila. His isn't a valiant soul, I fancy—except where the Widow Hopkins is concerned. He's making the running there, all right—eh?"

running there, all right—eh?"

"Nothing of the sort!" contradicted Scott promptly. "It's that glorified, kalsomined, cackling old hen who's doing all the running there is done. She ran down poor old MacNutt and then ran away from him again, in chasing up that condemned, oyster-shaped civilian there. And in doing so she's just about broken as decent and faithful a heart as ever beat in a queer body. May the devil fly away with her!"

May the devil fly away with her!"
"From what I've heard of him, I can't say that I ever fancied the devil particularly," observed Brinsley. "Still, I wouldn't wish him any such luck as that."

"Jim!" exclaimed Helen reprovingly. Then she fell silent, but after a

moment ended the pause.

"Do you know," said she, "I don't think it's because she's going so much with that civilian that makes Major MacNutt unhappy. I have an idea that it's the other way about; that there has been some estrangement between them that has caused his unhappiness, and that it's in consequence of that estrangement that she is encouraging that Mr. Thompson. Because I fancy that the unhappiness began to show.

itself—though not very plainly, then—before this Thompson man appeared."
"Maybe," conceded Scott grudgingly. "Anyhow, whichever way it is,

ly. "Anyhow, whichever way it is, our one best bet is that she's to blame for it. So dejected an officer of the 'chow' department I hope I'll never see again. It would give Mark Tapley himself the blues. Just look at him!"

Owing to the fact that for some minutes past I had been endeavoring to look out from between my shoulder blades, my neck was nearly broken. Therefore, I rose and switched my chair about so that it faced in the other direction, and just at that moment the Devil Dodger himself turned the corner of a street of tents and hove in sight.

Tall and angular MacNutt had always been, but now there was a stoop about his ungainly form which had not been there when I had left Tarlaginan, and I would not have thought that so dour and bony a face as his could express such an infinite sadness. Yet, as Helen had said, it was tragic.

Mrs. Hopkins and her escort had passed beyond him, so that they could not see him without turning, and they were far too much engrossed in each other to do that. MacNutt stopped for a moment and looked after them, and as he resumed his shambling in our direction I saw, though I could not hear, that he heaved a sigh from the very bottom of his great lungs. Then he caught sight of me, and a smile lighted his face for an instant, as sunlight, shining through a rift, might brighten a gray cloud. Holding out his hand, he hurried toward me.

"Eh, but I'm glad to see you again, colonel," said he. "I feared we'd seen the last of you—I'd no notion of meeting any good fortune such as this."

I shook his hand warmly, and spoke a few more or less conventional words of greeting. Ever since the time mentioned by Helen—the night when he tried to make amends for a false accusation which he had mistakenly preferred—I had liked the Devil Dodger. After that night I had got to know him better than did any one else in the

post, and my liking grew with our acquaintance, and I saw with more frequency the fierce honesty of his nature peeping through the reserve in which he enshrouded it. This grief, whatever its nature, would affect him in an incalculably greater degree than it would a man of shallower and less introspective mind, and with all my heart I pitied him. But he was not the sort of man to whom one could speak words of pity, and so, when the greeting ended, I could do nothing but allow him to go on his disconsolate way.

MacNutt went, as I said, but the memory of his face stayed behind, adding to the gloom with which we already were oversupplied. With infinite pains these friends of mine had planned a little dinner by way of welcome. A very good dinner it turned out to be, but it was not a success. We none of us were in sociable mood, and parted early. Directly afterward I went to

had

Fatigued though I was, I could not About the time I had retired on the previous evening the little ship which brought me had run into the tail end of a typhoon, which remained with us until morning. All night long I was rattled about like a pea in a whistle—a fat, soft pea; say one that has been boiled. Probably the resulting bruises had much to do with my wakefulness. But however that might be, it is certain that MacNutt's face still haunted me-haunted me until I began to resent its presence in my mind as an unwarrantable intrusion there. For as long as I could I endured the narrow limits of my camp cot, but at last I was driven to leave them; there was not room for me and the image of that face at the same time. I rose and stepped out into the breath-Then I almost less, moonlit night. cursed aloud, for there, on the silvered turf, not thirty feet away, stood Mac-Nutt himself,

His head was bare, his campaign hat clutched tightly in both hands, as with moving lips which gave forth no sound he gazed with rapt face at the sky above him, and with a fresh shock of pity I realized that the man was pouring out his troubled soul in

prayer.

Of course I could not stay and watch him. Almost would it have seemed worse than to read a letter addressed to another. I turned to go back into the tent, and in doing so accidentally struck a camp stool, which instantly upset and collapsed with a loud clack. MacNutt started, hesitated, and then came toward me. "So you'll not be able to sleep," said

"So you'll not be able to sleep," said he, disposing of my stammered apologies with a wave of his hand. "I regret it very much on your account, but from a selfish point of view I rejoice. It's lonely—lonely out here in the watches of the night." He dropped into a chair and hid his face in his hands. I waited, for I did not know what to say. After a little, without moving,

he went on.

"It's lonely," he said. "Lonely, and try as one can to prevent them, thoughts will come to one's mind—thoughts which bring temptation with them. Even prayer will not always aid. To our fallen natures the Lord sometimes seems so far away that no answer to our prayers can reach us. Probably it's a test. A test of our steadfastness to duty that's plainly seen. But it's hard—eh, man, but it's bitter hard!"

"MacNutt, how many days is it since you have had a decent night's sleep?" I demanded, with purposeful

sharpness.

He looked up at me in astonishment, and I saw with satisfaction that my tone, as I intended that it should, had broken his morbid train of thought.

"It's a month and more since I've been to bed at night, and I have but little leisure to sleep in the daytime," he answered simply.

"Why on earth should you want to sleep in the daytime?" I snapped, in

the same tone as before.

"Because I cannot—must not, rather—sleep at night."

"Why not?"

Again he dropped his face into his hands, and for a time I thought he

had not heard the question. I was about to repeat it when he suddenly looked up at me again, a curious intensity in his eyes.

"Have ye ever heard of the gift o' second sight?" he demanded.

"The Scotch superstition?" I replied.

"Yes, I've heard of it. Why?" "Superstition!" he repeated. "Man, to put down in yer mind as a superstition a belief held by thousands of men an' women as sensible as yerself -a belief proved true by them an' their forbears times without number is just rank nonsense, an' no more. Evil it may be; I'll not say the contrary. But superstition it is not."

"Even so," I conceded, seeing that was becoming excited again. "Still, he was becoming excited again. I can't see what it has to do with your

never going to bed at night."
"Listen!" he commanded, his slight Scotch accent growing a little stronger, as it always did under stress of emotion. "Listen, and I'll tell ye. I must talk to some one to-night, and I ken well enough that ye're a friend o' mine, an' will no mak' me rideeculous. I'm Highlan' born, as ye know. In my family that gift of which I spoke has descended from father to son for centuries. Not all had it, but always some one. I was studyin' for the meenistry when my father died. We'd moved to America, then, long before. I was the last o' the name in direct descent, an' to me the gift should have descended. But I fought against it with prayer, and with all my might. For it had been said, and I believed it, as I believe it still, that the gift of our race was in reality a curse, which the Evil One was permitted to lay upon us, the sons, for the sins of our fathers. Then, in answer to prayer, the word came to me that temptations would be placed in my path, but so long as I yielded not the curse should not descend upon me. And that word was a true word."

He rose and paced rapidly up and down in front of the tent, evidently in such agitation of mind that he would not trust himself to speak. But I knew that nothing I could say would now turn the current of his thoughts, so I

held my peace. After a few minutes he returned, and sat down again.

"As you may guess, I sinned," he went on. "I left the meenistry and, as an opportunity offered, I became an officer in the army, here. But not for that did the curse descend. I couldna see that it was my duty to starve if necessary, an' so I should have done, probably, for but few seemed to care to hear the Word as I preached it. It was through a winsome woman that the sin came.

"But surely there's no sin in the honest love of a man for a good woman,'

said I.

"No," he replied. "There's nae sin there. Yet it's through that love that the sin may come. As it did. Listen. I loved her, an' she me in return. We were happy. Ah, but she's bonny, man! An eye an' a smile that wad chairm a birdie frae a bush, while her pretty ways turn the hearts of men to water. But I can tell you nothing new of her-her, whom you've known these years gone. Yet, wi' all that she was, she said she loved me, an' we were betrothed."

He stopped, and I stared at him in blank amazement, to see if by any chance he could be joking, though I knew that he could not be. Neither was there any gleam of insanity in his eyes. Even the fanaticism which a few moments before had showed there now was gone, and they were gazing absently into space, no doubt seeing before them in imagination the woman they loved to look upon, and which their owner had described from his viewpoint. Scott had summarized his opinion of the same woman when he had referred to her as a "glorified, kalsomined, cackling old hen." Never until that moment had I understood how utterly blind love can be.

"Was it through the betrothal that the second sight came?" I asked.

"Ay. Through that and gold that was neither hers to give nor mine to take. It was no fault of hers, poor bit thing. Her training was at fault; not she. The blame was mine."

"Blame! What blame?" I inquired

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his he impatiently, but he went on as though

he had not heard.

"I know well that I'll be tellin' you naught that's new when I say that Hopkins, her late husband, was an evil man; one who robbed all with whom he had dealings. But maybe that you never heard that he accumulated money in that way, which his widow inherited. Once we were talking, she and I, of what our lives together would be, when she made some plan at which I laughed, and said we couldna compass for want of means. Then she tellt me of this money, what it was an' whence it came. Tellt me with that sweet laugh o' hers on her lips."

"Perhaps she didn't know it was stolen, though," I suggested hypocrit-

ically.

"I tried to make her know. With all the power o' my love to give life to my words I explained and beseeched her to make what restitution could be made by giving up this money, that we might start together on our new lives, with consciences as free from taint of evil as her innocent mind was of knowledge thereof. For she could not understand, even when I told her. Doubtless it was on account of that innocence that Providence chose her as its instrument to tempt me. For she did not understand. As I begged her to give up this stolen hoard, first she laughed, then coaxed, an' syne she flyted me."

"And then?" I asked.

"Then it was that I fell. She said I must choose; take both her an' the money or leave both, for they wadna be pairted. It was but a short struggle that my conscience made. The love was far too strong; I could not bring myself to lose her, an' so I pretended to laugh at my 'squeamishness,' as she called it. I agreed to take her an' the money both—to do all she asked of me."

"But, really, MacNutt—you mustn't let that bother you so. Evidently you reconsidered that agreement," said I, in an inane attempt at consolation.

"Ay. But not until after the warning came," he replied.

"Warning?"

"Just that. The second sight—the curse—fell on me, then and there, me with her kiss still warm upon my lips. A vision came, an' it told of danger to her, which by vigilance I might avert, and of probable death to me. What the danger was, or in what way death would come was not told. But the danger was to come by night, and so I watch."

He looked up at me again, his face ghastly with a fear that for the time replaced even his sorrow. Fear and dread of the unknown danger which, he doubted nothing, hung over the woman he loved. I am sure that no thought of self even so much as crossed his mind so far as danger was concerned; all his apprehensions were in behalf of that absurd old woman, who yet had power enough to bring a man of his austere strength to this pass. I had heard of the strain of mysticism which lies concealed under the hard common sense which normally predominates in the Scottish character, but never did I expect to see the fact manifested in any such way as this. But it is an undoubted fact that the Philippine climate plays queer tricks with the minds and morals of alien men-and women, too, for that matter. Not for a moment did I believe that words would be of any service in recalling MacNutt to himself; yet words were all that I had at command, so I resolved to try them.
"Look here, MacNutt," I said, in my

"Look here, MacNutt," I said, in my dryest manner. "Has it occurred to you that all that you've told me tonight is simply the result of an overgrown Scotch conscience, a liver likewise overgrown, combined with too much mental hairsplitting? For that is the exact truth. What possible danger can befall Mrs. Hopkins? What do you suppose the sentries would be

doing all that time?"

"Nothing, until too late," he responded promptly. "Don't you suppose that I've told myself all that you've said, and much more besides? I'm neither a fool nor a lunatic, though I don't know that I'd be surprised if

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you thought me one. Hard and long have I tried to argue myself out of this belief—this certainty—and the arguments, when sifted down, all confirm it."

"As how?" I cried incredulously.

"Like this, for example. Hopkins swindled the natives as well as the government. More than that, he had native accomplices, who must have known that he had money which is now in the hands of his widow. What more likely than they'd try to get hold of it if they could? The notion of its being mostly banked would never occur to them. Then, they're going in for that sort of thing lately, and, as they know, she is going away. And as for the sentries, they can prevent nothing. The camp won't be rushed. The natives wouldn't even try to run the guard, probably. Most likely they're already inside the lines, as servants of various kinds. Think over what I've just said when you try to apply common-sense arguments to what you doubtless consider this madness of mine. Good night. I must go now. But I want to thank you for listening to me-thank you very much, for I think it's done me good."

He shook my hand hastily, and before I could answer drifted silently away, vanishing into the shadows of some palms, leaving me even more astonished than before. One never can properly estimate how beneficial an effect the chance to put up a little argument has on a Scotchman. It was that, I fancy, that really had done MacNutt so much good. But, be the cause what it might, he was certainly, when he left me that night, far more like a normal man even than usual. Much relieved in my mind, I dropped into my cot and a dreamless sleep at prac-

tically the same instant.

When next I became conscious, I stood in the middle of the tent, a pistol, instinctively plucked from beneath the pillow, in my hand, and the echo of a wild shriek echoing in my ears, and the memory of what MacNutt had said in my mind. It could not, I suppose, have been more than a second or

so that I stood there, dazed and listening; it seemed much more. Then the shrill screams of a woman in an agony of fear pierced the night, time after time, almost without stopping. A man's—that is, a male—voice added a bass to their soprano, some Filipinos squealed and scuffled like fighting pigs, and the crack of a sentry's carbine emphasized his cry for the guard.

The sounds seemed to come in a burst, all at once, but so thoroughly well did they tell the story that I was quite prepared for the picture that pre-

sented itself.

More ponderous and shapeless than ever in his pajamas, the civilian, Thompson, crouched at the door of a tent from which he had not the courage to run. Opposite stood the tent of Mrs. Hopkins. It was from there that the screams were coming. With his back to it was the Devil Dodger, surrounded by a swarm of white-clad natives, mess servants, and corral hands; almost every one, as MacNutt had said, I had seen many times before at MacNutt was armed Tarlaginan. with a chair that he had caught up by the way, but two prostrate forms showed that in his long, bony arms it was a weapon to be reckoned with. He was fighting silently, after the manner of his race when fighting against desperate odds, saving his breath for working the swinging chair, which already had cleared a space in front and on both sides of him, upon which none of his assailants seemed willing to intrude, and he paused to draw into his lungs the needed air. I had no time to shout a warning. Like a flash a head appeared behind him, an arm reached over his shoulder, sending a knife deep into his body with the deadly thrust inside the collarbone. My pistol spoke of its own accord, so far as I know, and another shot echoed mine. The face back of MacNutt vanished, with two black spots on its forehead. Then I saw that the second shot had been from the weapon of Father Terence. He was running, his bare, white legs twinkling in and out of a long, black cassock, probably the first garment upon which he could lay his hand, and he fired as he ran. Father

Terence was a good shot.

The things that immediately followed are rather confused in my mind as I look back upon them. Dimly, I remember running with all my might, and that my feet seemed of lead, as they sometimes do in nightmares; that the assailants at our coming scuttled for cover, each in a different direction, and that I brought one of them, coughing and choking, to the ground. But my first distinct impression is that of Mac-Nutt, lying, white and still, with closed eyes, on my cot, with Scott and another surgeon bending over him, and Helen, pale, but efficient as ever, at their elbows. What impressed the scene upon my mind was the fact that Scott straightened himself, and with a grave face turned to Brinsley, standing close

"No hope," he said. "Internal bleeding. He'll go soon, but he may regain consciousness. Probably he'll want to see that damned old woman.

Go fetch her, won't you?"

Brinsley hurried away, and in a few minutes returned, muttering his choicest profanity. "It's no use; she won't come," said he, in response to an inquiring look. "She never could bear the sight of blood or wounded men, she says, and, besides, she and that Thompson man are just leaving for Manila, and they've no time."

"Leaving for Manila!" I repeated,

puzzled. "How can they leave for Manila?"

Brinsley nodded toward the tent door, and then, for the first time, I became aware that the sun was shining brightly, and that the transport was

lying in the roadstead.

"She broke down," explained my friend. "I don't know how. Circingle or crupper or something connected with her beastly engines. She's limping back to Manila, to send another steamer back for us. But Thompson has bribed his way and that of Mrs. Hopkins, I suppose. Here they come, now."

The sound of her name seemed to penetrate into MacNutt's straying consciousness. He opened his eyes and tried to speak. Scott and I bent down

to listen

"Don't let her know that I'm hurt—it would frighten her," he whispered faintly. "Let her think I'm on some duty that'll not let me go to see her off.

Will you?"

Scott nodded. He did not speak, but blew his nose instead as he motioned us away from the tent door, for with an effort MacNutt had turned his face in that direction. He could see from there the woman he loved as she embarked, and watched her as she became an indistinguishable speck in the stern of the launch, which finally disappeared around the transport. Then he wearily closed his glazing eyes.

"Eh, man, but she's bonny!" he said.

A QUERY

IF soft sweet music can be caught,
And in a rubber record wrought,
So that when we're in need of song
To ease the pressure of some wrong,
By winding up an instrument
We get the comfort therein pent,
Why may not some inventor make
A record Winter's breeze to take,
Fresh blown across the ice and snow,
To ease our superfervid woe
That August brings, and in our clime
Makes Fahrenheit work overtime?

CARLYLE SMITH.



Rush of productions foreshadows time when theatres will keep open all the year round. A farce about false teeth. New operetta from Vienna. A big thriller from Drury Lane. Social highwaymen again break into the drama



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OME time ago, Mr. Charles Frohman, in a prophetic mood, expressed the belief that a time would come when there would be no midsummer intermission in New York

theatricals, or, if there were, only one of very short duration. He pointed out that in London the regular winter season is at once supplemented by a period of play producing that lasts well into the summer, and this condition, he believed, would eventually be duplicated here.

We have not yet arrived at the point where the months of June and July and August see a steady record of productions, but it is undoubtedly true that the inactive period in the theatres is growing shorter. This year the last page of July had hardly been torn from our calendars before some of the theatres were being opened to tempt fate and the dramatic critics, whereas a few years ago little of importance was offered before the middle of September or the first of October.

Something more than the mere desire to be first in the field explains this changed condition. Every manager of skill knows that he must face the chance of failures, and if he has a mishap now, he will still have an opportunity to make another production and get fall bookings, whereas the late comers who meet with disaster on their first ventures of the season will experience greater difficulty, if they try to make up for first losses with a second venture. It is not so much in the hope of being the early bird that he makes the initial venture, as in that of having a second peck, if necessary.

Very early in the season, the Shuberts produced at Daly's a farce called "Billy," acted in its chief rôle by Sidney Drew, an experienced comedian. play was written by his wife, who has adopted the pen name of George Cameron, or rather one should say it was rewritten, since it originally appeared as a vaudeville sketch by Kenneth Lee, whose name, it may be mentioned, does not appear in connection with the expanded version. The hero of the piece, and the rôle played by Mr. Drew in vaudeville, as well as in the present production, is a young man very much in love, who finds himself in an embarrassing position as a result of the fact that he has lost his false teeth. He hasn't the courage to confess his deficiency to the young woman, and as a result finds himself in several bad predicaments. The play is rather elemental in its love story, light, sketchy, and at times very funny, but the subject wears thin before three acts are over.

Among the managers willing to take chances on a production while the thermometer was soaring, Mr. Henry W. Savage hurried into the field confessedly to forestall a rival, for "The Gay Hussars," the Viennese operetta with which the Knickerbocker Theatre opened, was without copyright protection in this country. As in the case of "The Merry Widow" and "The Devil," Mr. Savage found his own interests threatened by those of others who insisted that their rights to the work were as good as his. He would be an exceedingly unwise person who would attempt to decide the moral rights in a case of this kind, but the fact that haste makes waste was again exemplified.

"The Gay Hussars," unlike the majority of the light plays with music vouchsafed us from time to time, has an interesting, well-knit story, with a touch of serious and sentimental inter-The music throughout is charmest. But the piece makes demands upon both singers and actors of more than common ability, and, for one reason or another, these were lacking on the opening night. However, it is not unlikely, before "The Gay Hussars" is seen throughout the country, that the cast will be strengthened, in which case it ought to prove a popular entertain-

ment.

Mr. Charles Frohman, who secured several successful foreign musical entertainments, has evidently decided to defer most of them until a later period. In the meantime, he is not inactive, and the month was hardly under way before the first of his dramatic productions was seen. Readers of Ainslee's have already had the story of "The Flag Lieutenant," in which the very pleasing actor, Bruce McRae, opened the season at the Criterion. He is seen in the rôle of the gallant young hero, acted so long in London by Mr. Cyril Maude. "The Flag Lieutenant" is an excellent romantic entertainment, in which a similar idea is employed

to that which was used so advantageously in "The Second in Command," the play by Captain Robert Marshall, which John Drew used several years ago. The difference is that this play deals with the navy, whereas the army figured in the other. Miss Vera McChord and Miss Isabel Irving are the more prominent women of the company, and Lumsden Hare, who was with Miss Adams in "What Every Woman Knows," plays a sympathetic rôle.

Another of the younger leading men, Mr. William Courteney, has his opportunity in "Arsene Lupin," at the Lyceum. The play, which was a great success in Paris, is by Francis De Croisset and Maurice LeBland, and it details the experiences of one Gouncy-Martin, a common sort of person, who has amassed a handsome fortune, and acquired a taste for fine pictures and expensive articles of vertu. Some of his treasures are kept in his castle at Charmarace, and others he keeps in his town house in Paris. Gouncy-Martin has bought the castle from the young Duke of Charmarace, who, at about the same time, has become engaged to Miss Germaine Gouney-Mar-Germaine has a companion, a charming little Russian maiden, Sonia, whom she treats rather badly, and the duke, first pitying the girl, grows then to love her. Now Gouncy-Martin receives a letter, which troubles him exceedingly. It is from the celebrated thief, Arsene Lupin, who writes that he is going to visit the gentleman's Paris house, and abstract certain valuables which he happens to want badly. Gouney-Martin hurries to Paris, but is too late to prevent the theft.

With the arrival of a famous Parisian sleuth the mystery increases. Sonia disappears from the house, and the police begin to suspect that the duke and Arsene Lupin are in reality one and the same person. Their ineffectual attempts to make suspicion a certainty provide some amusing complications in

the later acts.

This play is only one of several which the season promises and in which the interest arises from the clash between criminals and their pursuers. "Detective Sparks," by Michael Morton, is another, and it serves to bring Hattie Williams out of musical comedy once more into a more legitimate field of acting.

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A lady and gentleman are wrecked while ballooning, and the newspapers make a great ado about it, for the people concerned are supposed to be so-cially prominent, though the names of the occupants of the balloon are not positively known. The balloon, however, belongs to a certain Jack Lawton, but it is not made clear that he was in it at the time of the accident. The only clue is a brooch found in the basket, and the first puzzle is to find the owner of the bauble.

Further mystery arises when Lord Axminster, an old-fashioned member of the nobility, receives word that an attempt will be made to rob The Towers, his ancestral abode, of a collection of miniatures which is his chief pride and joy; no, not quite, for he has just married a young American girl, and naturally places her first in his affection. As he is about to go to the continent on important business, he puts The Towers under the protection of Detective Sparks, a thief catcher whose ability is considered little less than marvelous. Not much is known of the detective's antecedents, and while Lord Axminster waits up to receive him, the robbery is effected. Then the identities of Sparks and a mysterious and clever crook known as The Prince are gradually involved in another mystery. Both are solved before the curtain falls.

"The Sins of Society," with which the New Amsterdam was opened for the season, is a Drury Lane thriller, in which orange blossoms reward the happy hero and his heroine, after many and diverse tribulations have been endured. The play is by Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton, skillful purveyors of this kind of melodrama, and an elaborate investiture of scenes and mechanical effects serves to keep the interest up. Some of the actors have been imported to play the parts

they originated in the London production, but the principal female rôle is in the hands of Laura Nelson Hall, well known to New Yorkers by reason of her acting as Elfie Sinclair, the show girl in "The Easiest Way," last season

The story of the play concerns Lady Marion Beaumont, who has been advised by the Duchess of Danbury that all bridge debts must be settled upon a certain date. As Lady Marion hasn't the money to meet her obligations, she confides her troubles to Noel Ferrers, an unscrupulous person, who tells her to utilize a diamond tiara loaned her by another woman, as a means for securing a loan of seven thousand pounds from a London money lender. Ferrers shows her how to substitute a lump of coal for the jewels while the money lender's back is turned, and the real tiara is returned to its rightful owner. Then, Ferrers uses his power over Lady Marion to force her to consent to lend her aid in his scheme to marry the beautiful Lady Gwendolen. gets Lady Marion to wager her seven thousand pounds on the Grand Prix, and has his jockey lose the race. By and by the money lender gets suspicious, and Sir Dorian, a self-sacrificing friend of Lady Gwendolen's, is suspected of the swindle. He is away in South Africa when the lady finally consents to wed the villain, but arrives just in time to clear his good name, and to claim her for his bride. The wicked villain is properly punished, of course, and everybody is happy who ought to be, before the final act is over.

A host of people fill in the action of the piece, and a number of well-known actors and actresses are kept sidestepping a good part of the evening while the heavy sets are being placed.

Evidences are not wanting, even at this early date, to prove that the coming theatrical season will be marked by an unusual preponderance of American plays. There will be a few notable exceptions, to be sure, in plays that have been written by foreign authors and that have either been tested abroad already or come from men so well es-

tablished in their profession that even their new and untried work is always eagerly sought by the American producing managers. But the American dramatist's opportunity is at hand, and he is in a position to-day to garner in the harvest of fame and dollars for which he has struggled for so many years, often with little encouragement

and less reward.

Two important factors have conspired to help the American playwright. Of primary importance, of course, is the fact that for a number of years the foreign fields have been comparatively sterile. Half a dozen men at the most have contributed the successful plays of the last three or four seasons abroad, and these men, recognized masters of their craft, are generally careful workers and authors, with something at least approximating an artistic conscience. As a result, they have not turned out plays by wholesale, being more inclined to produce slowly, but surely, in order that their works, when finished, might reflect no discredit upon themselves. At most, we have had from men like Mr. Pinero, Mr. Barrie, and Mr. Jones a single play each season. In the meantime, a host of younger men have been tried abroad, but most of them have been found wanting in the qualities necessary for dramatic success. Where one man like Maugham succeeded, a dozen others failed. The foreign play market, for several years, has not been able to respond to the strong demands of American producers.

In our own country, as abroad, there has been for years a small band of recognized playwrights; men like Fitch, Thomas, Klein, Broadhurst, and Royle, who could be depended upon from time to time to produce works that would have value. In the meantime, however, the younger and lesser known men, bravely struggling and crying for an opportunity, found their plays shut out from the footlights. The theatrical manager, regarding the matter in its strictly business aspect, found little reason to experiment with novices, so long as he was able to procure from abroad

plays that had already been tried and which were reasonably sure of a respectful hearing in this country. For, it is argued, the selection of plays, even in the case of experienced producers, involves much the same conditions as the buying of a pig in a poke. A play may look very promising in manuscript, but, except in rare cases, the managers believe that only actual presentation can determine its value from the public's point of view. Such being the case, there was far less risk in taking a play that had already been tried in London, Paris, or Berlin.

And, in some cases, the managers will still pin their faith to foreign authors. Thus, Ethel Barrymore, if she acts at all this season, will be seen in Pinero's newest work, "Cross-Channel," and Robert Edeson will act in W. Somerset Maugham's "The Noble Spaniard." Edmund Breese will be starred in James Bernard Fagan's play, "The Earth," which I described for Ains-

LEE's readers last month.

Of the plays from Paris, Rostand's long-delayed "Chanticleer" ought to create some interest, and Bernstein's "Israel" will have its first American performance. One of the more important French importations will be Alexander Bisson's "Madame X.," which is being done into English by John N. Raphael. Rostand's "The Lady of Dreams" may be presented, also.

The season's announcements bristle with names of native playwrights, many of them aspirants who are as yet entirely unknown to fame, and who a few seasons ago would have enjoyed little opportunity to place their work at all. Yet other announcements contain glowing promises of plays by men and women who were practically unknown a year or two ago, but who brought prosperous times to the theatres when their first plays saw the light. To this little band of pioneers the future dramatists of America will be much indebted, for in the theatre, as elsewhere, nothing succeeds like success. They were able to take advantage of the opportunities the times afforded, able to provide material which the public has

cagerly accepted and, as a result, they have been instrumental in creating a condition of confidence in native talent. To-day doors are open to the American dramatists which had long been closed.

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That the present season promises to be an intensely active one no one can doubt who will scan the announcements of the producing managers. There will probably be some changes in the plans as the winter progresses, but in the main the schedules will be followed.

Eugene Walter is completing a new serious drama for his wife, Charlotte Walker, and Augustus Thomas promises one new play, "The Harvest Moon," in which George Nash will play the leading part. Rupert Hughes has supplied Guy Bates with a play called "The Bridge." "The Law of Love," by George Broadhurst, the latter to be played by Cyril Scott. Paul Armstrong has ready a new play called "For a Woman," and Edward J. Locke, the author of "The Climax," will appear as the author of a new play called "The Saddlemaker." Channing Pollock's first offering is "Such a Little Queen," while Thomas Buchanan, whose "A Woman's Way" will continue to be Grace George's principal play, will have

a new piece called "The Intruder." Cleveland Moffett will give the stage two new plays in "For Better, For Worse" and "Esther Frear." Margaret Anglin will begin her New York season in "The Awakening of Helena Ritchie," which has already been indorsed in several other cities. Otis Skinner will have a new play by Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson, who are writing a play, also, for Madge Carr Cooke.

E. M. Royle is the author of a new play in which H. B. Warner will star, and Henry Blossom appears as the author of "Miss Philura," in which Chrystal Herne will be the principal actress. John Loughran's "The Ordeal," Joseph Medill Patterson's "A Little Brother of the Rich," Kellett Chambers' "An American Widow," in which Grace Filkins and Frederick Perry will play, and Edmund Day's "The Widow's Might," written for Lillian Russell, are a few of the other contemplated offerings.

There will be no dearth of musical plays, but a little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men. Even the most pronounced advocate of intelligent drama will want his evenings of fun and foolishness during the season. And he will surely get them.



SONNET

LLL up and strive," the strong man doth attest,
"To do good work and help Life to the end,
Letting the future my mistakes amend,
Keeping aswim with buoyant arm and breast,
Seeing Hope light each black wave's foamy crest;
Whilst to the weak a tireless hand I lend,
And aim more joy to give and less offend
Until the sun sink in my last day's west,
So shall I die, content: the world shall live!
Yet if the world live, then I cannot die.
Life will not break her chain and set me free;
For I am part of every laugh and sigh,
And, through mine inmost soul, all souls do give
Their signature of immortality."
WILLIAM STRUTHERS.

FOR BOOK LOVERS



Archibald Lowery Sessions

Ainslee's, present and future. The hero of William Somerset Maugham's "The Explorer" really an explorer. "Waylaid by Wireless," by Edwin Balmer, too fantastic. Rather a grotesque tale is Ford Madox Hurfer's "The Half Moon." "The Score," by Lucas Malet, consists of two stories, neither particularly pleasant. Mrs. Humphry Ward has developed in "Marriage a la Mode" a more or less "ommercially successful potboiler



HE opening chapters of George Barr Mc-Cutcheon's new Graustark story in the August and September numbers have made an impression much deeper than

even our rosiest anticipation had led us to expect. We knew, of course, that we had secured a big thing for our readers, and we had no doubt of their appreciation of what we had done for them, but we were entirely unprepared for the enthusiasm of their greeting. We think we are justified in saying that we have never received so many letters about any story ever published in AINSLEE'S, and they all bring the same message of congratulation and thanks.

There appears to have been a slight misunderstanding of a reference that was made in this department, in the August number, to requests that were made for advance sheets of Mr. Vachell's story, "Her Son." A good many of our readers interpreted that reference to mean that advance sheets of "Truxton King" might be had upon application to us. Now, much as we would like to comply with that or any other request that our friends make, this particular request happens to be one, compliance with which is physically impossible, owing to the exigencies governing the operation of the

magazine's presses. We fully sympathize with the eagerness of our readers to get this story, but after all they are not obliged to wait an unreasonable time for other installments. There might be some ground for impatience were "Truxton King" all that the magazine contained, but there is a good deal more in each number that is worth reading, and that will help to bridge over the interval.

In this number, for instance, is a complete novel by Molly Elliot Seawell, "The Whirlpool," the first magazine fiction from her pen in some time. That of itself is interesting, but read the story for yourself; it is on the subject of international marriage, always an absorbing topic.

If you ever read a funnier tale than "The Meddlers," by J. W. Marshall, we wish you would give us a chance to read it, too, and if Mr. Marshall cannot wring a laugh from you we are inclined to believe you will never laugh again.

There is variety, above all things, in the list of short stories; dramatic interest, love, adventure, humor, society, and finance.

For November, another exceptional table of contents has been constructed, with George Barr McCutcheon, of course, at the head. Nothing more need be said about him.

Wolcott Beard is the author of the complete novel, a story with a combina-

tion of Eastern and Western atmosphere, society, and adventure. James Branch Cabell will have a story, as well as Joseph C. Lincoln, Campbell MacCulloch, Jane W. Guthrie, Juliana Conover, and Gertrude Warden.

William Armstrong will take you right into the midst of the opening musical season, and will tell you about new operas and introduce you to new stars.

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William Somerset Maugham's last novel, "The Explorer," published by the Baker and Taylor Company, has at least the advantage of a title that is not meaningless, or absolutely misleading. For the explorer is really an explorer and an explorer in East Africa, a fact that ought to commend the story to a number of enthusiastic Americans.

Alec MacKenzie is the name of the gentleman whose vocation supplies the title, and the particular phase of his activities of which the book treats is that which is devoted to the reformation of the customs and habits of the white men who have shouldered the burden in East Africa. Or to be specific, Mr. MacKenzie undertakes to abolish the slave trade and incidentally to add a rich slice of the country to British territory.

There is a girl at home, of course, Lucy Allerton, and Alec has handicapped himself and his expedition, for her sake, with the care of her worthless brother, who nearly wrecks MacKenzie's prospects, but is given the chance, which he accepts, to save the expedition at the expense of his own

This fact, which is reported in England in a garbled form, for the time being destroys Alec's prestige and estranges Lucy, but not permanently, so that all ends well.

The best part of the story is the description of MacKenzie's expedition, and the dangers and hardships suffered by him and his followers because of young Allerton's misdeeds, and the scene between these two when Mac-

Kenzie offers him the chance to redeem himself is especially good.

The English end of the story is rather poor, because the author has failed to give Lucy Allerton a character such as she deserves. She is distinctly an early Victorian maiden, very proper and soft and sentimental, decidedly out of place in this sophisticated age.

The shadows of the book are relieved by the persiflage exchanged between Mrs. Crowley, a sprightly American widow, and her middle-aged lover.

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It is not often that we find so fantastic a tale as that which is given us in "Waylaid by Wireless," by Edwin Balmer, through Small, Maynard & Co.

Just why it should have been so entitled is not made altogether clear, for nobody in the story is waylaid by wireless, and the nearest approach to any such thing is the exchange of Marconi messages between one ship and another and the shore, almost at the end of the book.

The story is briefly described on the title page as "a suspicion, a warning, a sporting proposition, and an ocean pursuit." The fact that the word "wireless" has been used with good effect in a certain well-known drama, and its novelization by the present author, perhaps accounts for its reappearance

Young Mr. Preston seems to have taken the suspicion, directed toward him by Dunneston, the fake English earl, as so much of a joke that he actually did what he could to help it along. Americans have a reputation for possessing a sense of humor that is sometimes puzzling to foreigners, and if it manifests itself generally, as it did in the case of this young man, one can hardly wonder at alien mystification. But it is safe to say that the average American does not cultivate in the minds of other people the belief that he is a hotel thief-under the impression that it is a good joke.

Nevertheless, this is what Mr. Pres-

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ton did, and Dunneston found it a good thing for his purpose. The former could not convince his countrywomen, Mrs. Varris and her daughter, of his supposed guilt, however, fortunately for him, as it turned out, and through them he managed to avoid a particularly unpleasant predicament. All this happens in England, and he succeeds in getting away with the ladies on a steamer bound for home. If Dunneston had not taken the same boat the story would have come to an abrupt ending under another title-possibly. But the exigencies in the making of a dollar and a half book forced him to embark with Preston and the Varris ladies, and thus "Waylaid by Wireless" was rounded out.



"The 'Half Moon,'" by Ford Madox Hueffer, published by Doubleday, Page & Co., is, it may be inferred, intended as a "timely" book, since it is just three hundred years ago that a vessel of that name made her famous voyage, and since elaborate preparations to celebrate that event have been, for some time, widely advertised. The author and the publishers are to be congratulated on their foresight, even if the results are not what were expected.

In a long dedication, the author is at some pains to explain that his book is an attempt to answer his question, "Why did the New World attract?" A reading of the story, however, seems to suggest that it is an answer to the question, "Why did seventeenth cen-

tury witchcraft bewitch?"

He says that he found that Edward Colman was the first European to die on the shores of the Hudson River, and he apparently wrote the book to show that Colman died there because Anne Jeal made a little waxen image of him and then melted it; Anne having resented his marriage to Magdalena Koop the buxom daughter of a Knipperdolling, of Rye.

Colman was forced to leave Rye through the machinations of Anne, be-

cause he exported wool from that port, and two-thirds of the book are used in telling how she did it. Part of the balance gives a somewhat disconnected account of Edward's passage to Sandy Hook in the *Half Moon*, the rest being appropriated by Miss Jeal to work her spells upon Edward and the redoubtable Henry Hudson.

Strangely enough, she was not entirely satisfied with her success as a witch, and she regrets that, having killed him once, she cannot do it again

in the future.

It is, altogether, a rather grotesque tale, in which the *Half Moon* plays a decidedly minor part.



Two stories are contained in the volume entitled "The Score," by Lucas Malet, published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

The first of the two, "Out in the Open," brings before us once more that persistently cheerful young woman, Miss Poppy St. John, who played the leading lady—being an actress—in Mrs. Harrison's novel, "The Far Horizon."

Her rôle in the present story is somewhat different from the one she filled during her previous engagement, having finally attained the distinction and wealth that then seemed so remote. She is now a noted actress, a protégée of the successful middle-aged playwright, Mr. Antony Hammond, and is even sought in marriage by Lucius Denier, youngest son of Lord Denier, of Grimshott, and a political follower of Sir Richard Calmady.

The story is a long and, at times, somewhat hysterical dialogue between Poppy and Lucius, in which he beseches her to marry him, and she, though confessing that she loves him, rejects him for his own sake, and winds up with the rather equivocal declaration that "we artist people are made to love and be loved, but not to marry."

The second story, "Miserere Nobis," might be called a monologue, though, perhaps, in order to remove a possible

confusion of ideas in the minds of devotees of vaudeville, it should more appropriately be denominated a deathbed confession. It is really an account, in articulo mortis, given to a priest by a natural son, of his murder of his father. It is not a particularly pleasant topic to discuss, but the young man relieves his confession of some of its gruesomeness by his very evident pride in his gifts as a rhetorician, so that the reader lays the story aside with the conviction that it is not, after all, so horrible as the penitent meant it to be. The priest, of course, does not like it, because he knows all the time that the murdered man was his brother.

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The author of "In the Bishop's Carriage" has just published, through Doubleday, Page and Company, a new book, which is as different as possible from that which has made her best known.

"Michael Thwaites' Wife" might almost be called a study in double personality. It is, at any rate, the suggestion of double personality in the twin sisters. Therese and Beatrix, that gives the story its motive and interest. The two sisters are a kind of duplex heroine of the story, with characters as diametrically opposed as can well be conceived: Therese, gay, frivolous, absorbed in the superficial pleasures of life, with no serious purpose, bent upon the satisfaction of her caprices; Beatrix, sober, sedate, her ruling passion that of service to others, and capable of deep and lasting affection.

It is Michael Thwaites' misfortune to fall in love with the volatile Therese, who, after a very few more or less stormy years of wedded life, deserts him for a young clergyman. It chances that just at that time he is suffering from mental disability, caused by a murderous attack upon him by a political opponent. He is nursed by Beatrix, and upon regaining consciousness addresses her as Therese, in the belief that she is his wife. Encouraged by his friends, she allows his

mistake to go uncorrected, and thereafter he believes that it is Beatrix who has eloped with his friend.

Miss Michelson has formulated a good idea for her story, but she has prolonged it to an unwarrantable length, so that the narrative drags until the reader becomes somewhat weary of it. A condensation to two-thirds of its four hundred pages would have made it much more readable. Nevertheless, most of the characterization is good enough to enlist one's sympathy with the people.

It is not quite clear why John Galsworthy should have called his new book, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, "Fraternity," because it has little to do with brotherly love. It is essentially a story of marital unhappiness, the account of the ever-growing estrangement between Hilary Dallison and his wife, an estrangement caused, it is to be inferred, by the fundamental impossibility of a common understanding between them.

There is a good deal of talk about universal brotherhood by Mr. Stone, Mrs. Dallison's father, an old gentleman who is writing a book on the subject, and who is full of the sort of ideas scorned by the "practical man," but it has little to do with the story itself.

Dallison is the man of thought who is always afraid to act, and though he is represented as a very attractive character, he is the despair of his friends, and especially his brother, a busy lawyer, who has no time for anything but action.

Everything that Hilary undertakes to do results in some futility, even his plan to go away with "the little model" in a fit of revolt at his wife's treatment of him. Her attitude is such that, in spite of her attachment, she seems, by her suspicions of him, her incapacity to understand him, inevitably to force him from her, and he finally does go away, but without the little model.

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obis," ough, ossible with which the story is written, the scrupulous analysis of character and motives, Mr. Galsworthy seems to have failed to put a single really human man or woman in his story.

Mrs. Humphry Ward has, temporarily, deserted her puppets of British propriety and respectability to deliver a lecture to her half-civilized American cousins on certain manifestations of their shortcomings.

If we are to judge by "Marriage à la Mode," published by Doubleday, Page & Co., she learned very little of us during her recent visit, beyond the prevalence of the much-discussed di-

vorce evil.

As a rule, Americans accept foreign criticism good-naturedly, perhaps be-cause they are too busy with other things to spare the time to get very much excited over it, and in Mrs. Ward's case they have been generous as well, for they have bought and read her book, and have accepted it as part of their entertainment and diversion.

"Marriage à la Mode" is not likely to be taken very seriously, certainly not as an exposition of the social defects of Americans. Her English hero, Roger Barnes, who is depicted as an avowed fortune hunter, ameliorates any wounds to American pride, and as a story the book is pervaded by the same stiff, formal artificiality that has, for so long, characterized all her work. There is not a real living human individuality in the whole book. Barnes and Daphne, the unhappy husband and wife, make no genuine appeal to the reader's sympathy. General Hobson is a caricature of the bluff middle-aged British army officer. Cecilia Boyson represents no type of the feminine that ever was known, and it would be beyond the power of the profoundest student of human nature to locate Mrs. Verrier.

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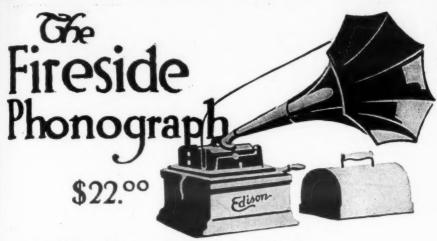
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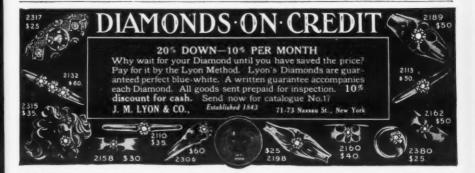
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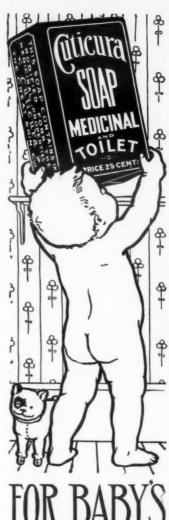


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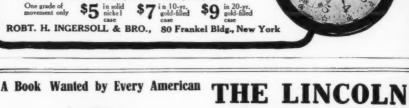
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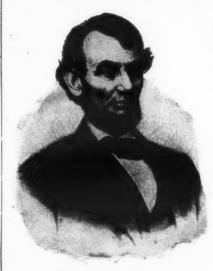
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